

**The significance of anime as a novel animation form,
referencing selected works by Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi
Kon and Mamoru Oshii**

Ywain Tomos

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Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies,

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Abstract

Japanese anime is 'one of the most explosive forms of visual culture to emerge at the crossroads of transnational cultural production' (Brown, 2006:1). This study proposes that anime is framed in a different way from orthodox Hollywood cel animation (Wells,1998), influenced by Japanese aesthetics, iconography, social norms and a well developed role for individual anime directors. The significance of anime as a novel form of animation is specifically linked to a broader alignment within Japanese cultural identity. The study benefits from previous research by Thomas Lamarre (2009) who proposed the concept of the 'animetic process' and Hiroki Azuma's (2009) post-modernist discourse on 'otaku' (anime fans). Close reading analyses of selected feature films in the anime canon directed by Hayao Miyazaki (1941-), Satoshi Kon (1963-2010) and Mamoru Oshii (1951-) were conducted, to determine the significance (defined as sharing a common meaning and value) of anime within contemporary discourses on animation. The study concludes that anime represents a continuation of Japanese film tradition which has frequently borrowed from other film cultures, notably Hollywood, but then subverted this influence through a specifically Japanese gaze. Evidence for anime being regarded as novel in terms of the development of film tradition was found in relation to its adoption of digital trans-modality and interactivity to become a mediated cinematic form which breaks new ground. The dialogue between the anime director as the creative force and the viewer as the active consumer has wider implication for this hypothesis that modern anime is emerging as an interesting and important filmic form in digital environments.

Chapter 1: Introduction

'Any way you look at it, all the information that a person accumulates in a lifetime is just a drop in the bucket'. (Batou, 'Kokaku Kidotai', Oshii, 1995)

1.1 Research aims

This study examines the significance of Japanese anime in the development of animation as a cinematic form, using a novel approach which links cultural and technological factors with an assessment of the importance of authorship. For the purposes of this study, 'significance' is defined as demonstrating common meaning and value across texts. Anime challenges conventional perceptions of orthodox cel animation in its particularly Japanese visual aesthetic, its complex narratives, detailed characterisation and multi-modal digital forms, including interactive websites and video games. The example provided by anime raises interesting questions about the evolution of animation beyond the orthodox Hollywood genre identified by Wells (1998). Is anime best defined as a sub-genre of orthodox cel animation or is it a representation of a new cinematic form consistent with the emergence of an interactive digital environment, and grounded by specific Japanese social influences and aesthetic traditions? The empirical premise of this study proposes that Japanese anime is framed in a significantly different way from orthodox cel animation and, as such, represents a distinct cinematic form. The historical development of anime draws on both Japanese and external influences. However I propose that, where non-Japanese elements are found in anime texts, they are represented as a subversion of their conventional use in orthodox cel animation.

As Manovich observed, “the opposition between the styles of animation and cinema defined the culture of moving images in the twentieth century” (Manovich, 2001:298). It is interesting to reflect on this standpoint at the beginning of the twenty first century, when

digital developments have precipitated a revisionist view of animation as a potentially 'superior' rather than 'inferior' film form compared to conventional live action cinematic form. In focusing on the creative film output of three influential anime directors, Hayao Miyazaki (1941 -), Satoshi Kon (1963-2010) and Mamoru Oshii (1951-), this study assesses the evidence for such a shift and scrutinised the likely impact of a distinctive multi-modal 'animetic' form (Lamarre,2009) beyond the conventional characteristics of orthodox cel animation.

The study also assesses whether anime is an important bridge between conventional animation and live action cinematic forms. I propose that anime breaks down the distinctiveness which previous typologies of cinematic form have attributed to modes of production using live actors in a cinematic representation of reality, and animated processes which manipulate drawn images in an increasingly hyper-realist style. This hypothesis draws on the creative work of Mamoru Oshii who stated in an interview in 2004 that all cinema was now animation (Suchenski, 2004). In new digital environments where techniques to create hyper-real contexts challenge audiences' visual perceptions and understanding, modern anime feature films represent a distinct, stylistic 'animetic' form. This form differs from the output which characterises contemporary Hollywood animation in being a hybrid of manual and digital production which is novel in its approach.

The best known anime films beyond Japan are represented by the works of Hayao Miyazaki, whose blending of Japanese cultural tradition with external literary inspiration from other cultural traditions provokes fundamental questions of anime's ability to absorb and re-purpose texts in a unique process. Miyazaki's works also invoke a wider interest in the role of anime in cultural representation and identity and its boundaries within

participatory culture (Jenkins, 1992).

The study adopts the hypothesis that anime is a cultural phenomenon which informs the general discourse on animation as a cinematic form through its distinctiveness from orthodox animation. Previous research has tended to focus on specific anime sub-genres. This research follows a holistic approach which maps across diverse anime texts to determine whether it was possible to identify common characteristics which support a new explanation of anime's world view and its place within animation as a cinematic tradition.

1.2 Defining Anime

1.2.1 The anime industry

Although the term 'anime' in Japanese refers to animation from any source, semiotically it represents a particular visual style of animation which uses unique signifiers for Japanese cultural representations including sound and music. The commercial market for anime peaked at 241.5 billion yen in 2005 and then declined as Japan's economy contracted further. Since 2009, there has been a 1.6% increase in the market to 216.4 billion yen (Media Research Institute Inc., 2010). Exports to the United States peaked in 2003 at 4.84 billion dollars. In 2009, this figure stood at 2.41 billion dollars, a decline partly fuelled by the high cost of Japanese blu-ray discs in North America. Yet the sales of digital manga grew from 1 million dollars in 2009 to 8 million dollars in 2010, due probably to its distribution via Apple i-phones (Japanese External Trade Organization Content Market in the United States White Paper 2010/2011).

Increasingly therefore anime is a multi-modal phenomenon. The entire anime experience is planned as a collaborative enterprise. It involves television stations, advertising agencies, toy companies and anime production houses forming consortia to

undertake joint planning. The additional outputs are an essential part of the production strategy. The creative anime film or printed manga does not generate the profit. This is gained through the use of celebrity actors or singers, 'senyuu', to voice the characters and produce the soundtrack, associated soft toys and marketing materials, particularly for the secondary characters. The actual film production is undertaken by a prime contractor supported by numerous sub-contractors in every phase of production. The establishment of a franchise for popular anime series extends to the video game, mobile phone application ('ke-tai') and interactive website. Increasingly the distribution is via Internet streaming websites such as the American website, 'www.crunchyroll.com', which has streamed films officially since 2009. In 2013, 'www.daisuki.net' began streaming anime from large producers in an attempt to connect new anime directly with fans. 'www.waoryu.jp' also emerged in February 2013 as a portal for Japanese fans with free videos, audio, cosplay (costume play) and fashion. The business model for direct streaming digital delivery is still emerging. However the market for analogue DVD products is declining in the move towards downloaded content.

The Association of Japanese Animation (AJA) was formed in 2002 as a trade body to support the diversification of anime into new multi-modal global markets and to protect intellectual property rights in online contexts. This was partly an acknowledgement of the competition from other East Asian countries such as South Korea and China for the anime market whereas previously Japanese studios outsourced work to these countries. Japanese government statistics for 2011 indicate that there were 430 anime production houses in Japan. Of these, 264, or 61.4%, were concentrated in Tokyo's 23 central wards. Studios which primarily produce feature anime for cinema release are the exception, as

most anime production companies produce output for television. However in 2011, the 'Kido Senshi Gandamu Yunikon' *Gundam Unicorn* series was shown directly in cinemas by Bandai Visual and Sunrise and more are planned. The importance of the East Asia market, particularly China, for the Japanese anime industry is exemplified by the falling birth rate in Japan which is leading to studios seeking new markets for anime products aimed at younger audiences.

1.2.2 The creative form

Developed from manga graphic books, the close relationship between printed manga and anime is evidenced by the statistic that 90% of anime films are based on manga (MacWilliams, 2008). The conventional Western view of animation as being mainly for children or described as 'low' culture is challenged by the sophistication and complexity of anime which explores issues such as gender identity, relationships between humans and technology and the tensions of contemporary life. Hayao Miyazaki has directed award-winning anime aimed at children however this output does not consistently follow genre conventions for children's animation as I outline in Chapter 5. Satoshi Kon created anime with sophisticated narratives specifically aimed at adult audiences which adopted live action cinema conventions, and Mamoru Oshii experimented with new animation sub-genres, including hybrid works which blend characteristic anime conventions in a live cinema environment, for example 'Abalon' (Oshii, 2001). The works of these directors provided a rich creative and challenging context for the study.

In the twenty first century anime's development of blended 2-D and 3-D Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) raises interesting issues of how the conventional Cartesian

perspective associated with film applies to anime. Lamarre (2013) proposed that, when discussing anime, it is more accurate to refer to 'radical perspectivalism' where anime demonstrates a range of potential perspectives. Some of these express a Cartesian duality, others demonstrate a more nuanced approach drawing on tenets of Japanese philosophy. The net result is a creative form with complex characteristics which remains relatively marginalised in global genre definitions as a sub-genre of orthodox cel animation.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The potential for re-defining conventional viewpoints regarding cel animation to include the complex perspectives demonstrated by anime provided the starting point for researching this study. Empirically anime is clearly a product of an indigenous Japanese society and culture. This has shaped the creative processes and production values of anime output. The distribution of anime beyond Japan since the 1980s, particularly in digital environments, has introduced its complexity to new audiences and renewed its scrutiny within a wider global cinematic discourse. In addition, in describing a tradition which challenges the hegemony of Hollywood animation, there may be a model approach which could be used to de-construct other national animation traditions which use indigenous culture and language as the source of creative inspiration.

A central aim of this study is to assess whether the continuing influence of traditional Japanese aesthetics remains a determining factor in the development of anime. Important characteristics of Japanese aesthetics such as 'wabi-sabi (the incompleteness of beauty) and 'mono no aware' (the sadness associated with impermanence) are commonly

found in Japanese culture. The study examined whether these characteristics are re-purposed in global anime. This questioning approach is not limited to physical form and iconography. In its narratives and characterisations, anime continually questions the relationship between humans and technology as a self-reflexive dialogue. Reflections on human conditions whether directly, or in an allegorical visual representation, are at the heart of anime's creative inspiration. In order to construct a world view of anime which attempts to rationalise its complexity and its boundaries, it is necessary to identify its origins, its major influences, its convergence with other cultural consumption beyond cinema and the breadth of its own influence on film traditions.

In framing the research, three characteristics which potentially significantly inform this discourse on anime as a new animation cinematic form are identified. Firstly, the contrast in its modes of production and consumption with orthodox cel animation, secondly, the significance of Japanese aesthetics and culture to the complexity of its form represented by its many sub-genres, and finally the influence of authorship in creating the diversity of anime texts, represented by selected works from three contrasting anime directors. These three characteristics are initially reviewed from the evidence of previous research literature to assess their robustness as to whether they are capable of forming the basis for the methodology (outlined in greater detail in Chapter 3).

1.4 Structure of the study

Using the selected output of the chosen anime film directors, the three research areas assess the evidence for anime to be regarded as a form distinguished by a specific mode of production, visual aesthetic, diverse genres and themes, complex narratives and characterisation reflecting the unique world view of its individual director/ manga author.

Chapter 2 examines current literature on anime. Chapter 3 identifies the methodology to investigate the research questions thus, the key influences on anime in its development as a multi-modal form; the extent of aesthetical and cultural influences on anime's development and the significance of authorship in the development of anime. Empirical evidence is analysed through a close reading of selected works directed by Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi Kon and Mamoru Oshii. Chapter 4 examines the development of anime within Japan and more globally.

I was reminded of the importance of perspective during conversations with Japanese academics in 2011 on the place of anime within new cinematic digital contexts. A concern was expressed that academic scrutiny of the consumption of anime, both within Japan and globally, is overtly filtered from the position of the importance of Western cinematic tradition. This perspective potentially downplays the significance of indigenous cinematic tradition. However in digital contexts, is it possible to view anime in isolation from its global consumption outside Japan? I examine this critical viewpoint in my analysis of individual works in Chapters 5, 6 and 7. Chapter 5 examines the evidence found in the creative work of selected films directed by Hayao Miyazaki. Chapter 6 investigates the evidence found in selected works by Satoshi Kon. The works of Mamoru Oshii are investigated in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 contains the analysis of the evidence identified in previous chapters and summarises the main conclusions of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

'Admiration is the furthest thing from understanding'. (Aizen Sosuke, 'Bleach', Kubo, 2005)

Previous research into anime from the Western academic tradition has a tendency to view it as part of a broad cinematic tradition based on the hyper-realist conventions of Hollywood cel animation. In Japan itself, academic writing has acknowledged the influence of early Hollywood animation on the development of anime and the later influence of Walt Disney on Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989) in the 1950s. However the Japanese viewpoint emphasises the significance of indigenous aesthetic conventions which had their origins in early Japanese cultural traditions. Reconciling these two viewpoints requires an acknowledgement that, accepting certain common traits in the physical production and distribution of cel animation, there is room for diverse approaches to the cinematic form which is animation.

The literature is reviewed from the perspective of initially defining orthodox cel animation, examining the diffuse definitions of anime, its place in Japanese cultural and economic contexts, its global role beyond Japan, particularly in relation to Western perceptions of anime, its development of multi-modal forms and its technical development within the discourse on auteuristic approaches.

2.1 Definitions of orthodox animation

The theorisation of the development of animation has drawn many researchers. Paul Wells proposed a framework for the study of animation as, 'no theory without practice; no practice without theory; no progress without history' (Wells & Hardstaff, 2008:

20). This study adopts the framework as a useful guideline to make sense of the complexities involved. Beyond technical developments, issues of production methods, content development, distribution and associated multi-modal forms require examination. I focus on the development of Hollywood animation as the dominant player in global animation in developing the comparison with Japanese anime, although other national animation traditions are equally interesting. Wells & Hardstaff (2008) acknowledged the difficulties in clearly delimiting boundaries for multi-modal animation in digital contexts, for example, video games which blur distinctions between empirical characteristics of film form such as narrative, characterisation and mise-en-scène. This was a valuable warning for the study research. However the attraction of anime is that it provides a cultural and cinematic context where animation takes centre stage. Animation is the dominant cinematic form in Japan not the minor genre which characterises its position within the Hollywood context.

Wells' seminal contribution to the study of animation has produced several important texts. His identification of "deep structure" which enables animation to be separated from live action genre typologies led him to propose seven genres of animated film, namely formal, de-constructive, political, abstract, re-narration, paradigmatic, and primal (Wells, 2002). These abstract definitions are valuable in attempting comparison across national film traditions. For example, 'de-constructive' as a form which deliberately exposes its own production, often for comic effect, and 'primal' as a description of animation which attempts to convey emotion and feelings. Wells (1998) expressed criticism of Disney's emphasis on hyper-realism and his subsequent influence on Hollywood animation referring to it as 'orthodox' animation. I outline this approach in

greater detail in Chapter 3.

Taking Carroll's (1998) definition of 'mass art' as an artistic form which is designed for mass reproduction to a large audience, anime's position in Japan as a mass cultural form would suggest that it forms part of 'low' art. Yet it includes examples of what Berndt (2008) has described as a tradition of 'fine arts'. Unlike the critique of mass art (Adorno, 1991) as appealing to the lowest common denominator, anime contains a sophistication of themes, styles and characterisation which is a 'highly distributed and pervasive imagery that spans multiple material forms, an imaginary which is massive but not mass' (Ito, 2003:34). The interesting question of why anime represents a 'fine arts' tradition whereas orthodox cel animation in the Hollywood tradition is more representative of 'mass art', is examined in Chapter 4.

Following Wells' own maxim, it is also necessary to define cel animation in terms of social and cultural determinism, theory also requires practice, progress requires history. Basic manual manipulation of images has a long history. Rapid actions to produce an illusion of movement remains at the heart of all animation techniques and processes. It could be argued that Disney's most influential contribution was the development of a mass audience for animations, successfully integrating the latest technology with a strong marketing ethos. The association of the films with the director has echoes of the later 'auteur director' although Disney had limited technical responsibility for his major films. Indeed Gabler (2008) noted Disney's distaste for the brand 'Walt Disney' as a concept disassociated from the human being. Robinson et al (2007) identified a negative influence on children's views of older characters from their representation in Disney films. These findings echo earlier criticism by Giroux (1994) who questioned Disney's use of 'its

commanding legitimacy and cultural authority' (Giroux, 1994: 66) to promote aggressive consumerism in its scripted representations of American life. Zukins (1991) identified the economic power of visual consumption where the mode of production was controlled by few although the methods of dissemination were diffuse. These critical studies are useful in highlighting the need to view the modes of production as well as the visualisation process when comparing anime with orthodox Hollywood animation.

Orthodox animation also formed the basis for television cartoons, dominated in America by Hanna-Barbera from 1957 until 1996 when it was incorporated into Time Warner. Disney chose not to enter this lucrative market for economic reasons as the start-up costs were estimated to be too high (Gabler, 2008). The establishment of multiple channel television and more recent web-based services continues to drive the market for children's animation. The global success of the 'Simpsons' (Groening, 1989-), 'Family Guy' (McFarlane, 1999-) and 'South Park' (Parker & Stone, 1997-) demonstrated an increasing sophistication of satire and social comment which challenged the hyper-reality of conservative American social values represented by Disney (Alberti, 2003). Rhodes (2001) commented on the similarities between the 'Simpsons' and Bakhtin's ideas of carnival, particularly in relation to 'grotesque realism'. Interestingly Napier (2005) made a similar point in relation to anime, emphasising the subversion of conventional social values.

2.2 Definitions of anime

Academic interest in the development of anime has increased substantially since the 1980s, when anime became more widely available outside Japan. Craig (2000) suggested that anime draws on the Japanese appreciation of high quality visual art and

the rich mythological culture which provides a source of ideas and expertise. Brown (2006) described anime as 'one of the most explosive forms of visual culture to emerge at the crossroads of transnational cultural production' (Brown, 2006:1).

Global perspectives therefore cannot be ignored in any assessment of the development of anime although they will require carefully scrutiny when the evidence for anime's status as a new animation form is presented. In its complexity and in the various discourses which potentially define anime, there are significant challenges for the researcher. Anime can be viewed and consumed from multiple perspectives, as a Japanese speaker/ as a non-Japanese speaker, as a cultural commentator/ a fan (otaku) and as mainstream/ developmental cinema. Investigating these viewpoints represents both an empirical aim and challenge for the study.

From the perspective of global film tradition, anime's Japanese origin forms only one element which defines anime's position in the animation canon. The significance of anime from this perspective is its influence on Hollywood animation in the production of works aimed at diverse audiences (Daliot-Bul, 2013). Anime's popularity in the United States of America in the 1990s may be viewed as a continuation of a nineteenth century fascination with all things Japanese (Napier, 2007).

The evidence for anime being best defined as a sub-genre of orthodox cel animation draws on evidence which points to the influence of Western animators on anime directors. Drazen (2003) identified the influence of Walt Disney on the drawings in the seminal anime by Osamu Tezuka, 'Tetsuwan Atomu' *Astro Boy* (Tezuka, 1963). He further observed that the facial features of many anime characters are not generally racially defined as Japanese or Asian and most are white. This visual convention, termed '

mukokuseki', facilitates the adaption of anime outside Japan for local consumption. On this basis, it could be argued that anime has developed with a conventional representation of visual features found in orthodox cel animation and, as a consequence, is less centred on specific Japanese iconography. The use in many sub-genres of anime of or non-Japanese features for characterisation also provides evidence of anime being influenced by a global animation tradition.

This interpretation of anime's visual aesthetics may however not be so clear cut as it fails to acknowledge specific Japanese aesthetic traditions. As Sato (2006) noted, anime's consumption in Japan may be more associated with 'nihonjin banare' or action which is not representative of Japanese reality. Using this paradigm, the copying of Western facial features is not a direct transfer of Western cultural values but an accepted Japanese aesthetic for beauty as representing something unobtainable. The use of Western facial characteristics therefore represents an indigenous cultural position which has chosen this representation as the current standard of unobtainable beauty.

This approach was supported by Hanabusa (2009) who proposed that the Original Video Animation (OVA) anime 'Hakudoku no Mura' *Helter Skelter* (Okazaki, 1997) is an example of the changing representation of the female body in modern Japanese society to reflect Western standards of beauty. One of the main female characters has repeated plastic surgery while the other suffers from eating disorders. This extreme behaviour appears to echo Japanese aspirations to acquire Western facial and body characteristics in place of their own (contrasting with the way in which familiar physical characteristics are idealised in the USA to represent beauty). It also raises interesting questions of the potential lasting influence of the post-war American occupation on Japanese cultural

perspectives.

It is also possible to identify a joint interest between anime and Hollywood in similar dystopic and psychological thriller genres, exemplified by the similarity in the themes of films such as 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (Oshii, 1995) / *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1999), 'Paprika' (Kon, 2006) / *Inception* (Nolan, 2010) and 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue* (Kon, 1997) / *Black Swan* (Aronofsky, 2010). There are therefore areas of anime which blend well into a discourse on global film culture, interpreting anime as an interesting variant on a common film tradition driven by the influence of Hollywood.

The production processes for anime also reflect the broader global industrial norms for animation. Japanese anime studios use Hollywood-inspired methods to develop and produce the drawings, and digital Computer Generated Imagery (CGI) forms a significant element of anime feature films in the twenty first century. The distribution and marketing of anime films reflect the emphasis on multi-modal delivery, common to both anime and Hollywood animation. In purchasing the transnational rights to Studio Ghibli's output in the 1990s, the Walt Disney Company acknowledged the commercial value of anime films outside Japan. This attention was amplified by the rapid growth of Internet fandoms in the same period where anime fans co-created, discussed and shared anime series in a medium dis-associated from its original context in Japan. In proposing this view of anime as part of a wider transnational film tradition, there is a need to acknowledge the similarities. However I propose that there is an alternative viewpoint in interpreting these global characteristics which I detail in Chapter 4.

The complexity of anime as represented by its many sub-genres, visual forms, modes of production and trans-medial outputs requires a disciplined approach to its study.

A significant factor is represented by the close relationship between anime and Japanese cultural identity. Whereas this direct association provides opportunities to examine anime as a representation of Japanese national cinema, the communication of anime via worldwide digital networks has resulted in external perceptions of anime which invite an analysis of how far anime may be influencing both the supply of international animation output and the demand from trans-national audiences for anime. One apparent anomaly is the continuing supply of anime with its original Japanese soundtrack. What lessons may be available for marketing output from other national cinematic traditions which also compete with output in global languages such as English on a worldwide basis?

Anime is characterised by the visibility of its creative authors. A discourse on authorship may be approached from the perspective of the author, the text and the reader/spectator. All three perspectives are involved in a study of anime with the author/film director as a focal point for the interpretation of the text to the spectator. In anime, recent co-contributions by anime fans through online crowd sourcing techniques provides an interesting additional perspective where potentially new versions of texts appear. In the global film tradition, auteur theory emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as a contribution to the debate on authorship. Sarris (1962) identified three characteristics of auteur theory, the director as auteur was required to have technical aptitude, a signature style across films which was recognisable to the audience and an identifiable approach to tell a story.

I will debate the evidence relevant for each director in later Chapters, however the concept of individual creativity or auteurship is an interesting aspect of anime. In framing anime and identifying characteristics which demonstrate a degree of consistency, there is

always the danger of attempting to fit anime into pre-existing assumptions. Bordwell (1989) referred to the need to consider four types of 'meanings' – explicit, referential, implicit and symptomatic when analysing film texts. The analysis of individual directors' works needs to acknowledge that multiple meanings will exist under the umbrella of authorship. In the context of Hayao Miyazaki, for example, how significant is the interpretation provided by the displays in Studio Ghibli Museum in Tokyo as a referential object which demonstrates his idiosyncratic ideas as much as his creative texts?

How does classical auteur theory, as articulated by Truffaut (1954) and Sarris (1962), relate to anime? Critics of auteur theory such as Kael (1971) observed that film making is a collaborative affair with screen writers, camera operators, actors and editors all playing an essential part. This is equally true of anime where the process is highly mechanised. However the chosen anime directors for this study have in common an apprenticeship as artist and animator for manga and anime. Indeed Oshii's storyboards were so detailed that they could have been animated without addition (Tonyshi, 2005). The small size of early animation studios and associated limited budgets enabled young animators to become directors early in their careers. This encouraged an individualistic style and creative expression which mirrors the strong auteur tradition in Japanese feature films. However there is an interesting debate to be had around how far studios such as Toei influenced anime output, although Studio Ghibli was clearly formed as a commercial vehicle to develop and distribute Miyazaki's films.

Wells (2002) proposed that auteur theory provides a vocabulary for animation, indeed animation 'may be viewed as the most auteurist of film practices' (Wells,2002:73), In observing the significance of the relationship between the author, the text and the mode

of production, Wells is an important source for this study which seeks to follow a similar framework. Japanese anime places a high value on the creator of the original manga or anime. Miyazaki, for example, is notorious for correcting by hand thousands of drawings for his films even when they were produced digitally. As storyboards form the basic elements of the animated process, visual design and narrative, anime directors can claim to be responsible for the creative inspiration for their films. In addition, the directors chose the actors for the voice overs and the soundtrack. Their meticulous attention to detail enables an analysis to be made of their approach and individual contribution to the overall output.

Moist & Bartholemew (2007) identified strategies for creative traditionalism developed by Miyazaki which relied on a balance between the characteristics of form, medium, cultural content and individual creation. The elements of individual creation had a great deal in common with auteur theory viewed as the over-riding influence of the individual director. Similarly Tze-Yue (2010) analysed Miyazaki's use of the Japanese aesthetic concept of 'ma' translated loosely as 'pause' from the perspective of auteur theory. I assess this interpretation in Chapter 5 as part of a broader critique of potential inconsistencies in Miyazaki's approach to 'Japanese-ness' in his creative works.

As a mass medium, the rise of anime in Japan coincided with the decline of the post-war 'golden' era of Japanese feature films made by internationally respected film makers. Early post-war attempts to sell animation to America failed but the growing market in Japan for printed manga drove the production of anime. In 1994, it was estimated that 35% of all Japanese printed material consisted of Manga comics (Grigsby, 1998). Manga printed comics aimed at a wide audience of both adults and children have been popular in

Japan since 1874 (Richie, 1990).

As I have already noted, the first influential anime director, Osamu Tezuka, was influenced by the appearance in Japan of Hanna-Barbera television cartoons in the late 1950s, which persuaded him to aim at the television market. Television was replacing cinemas as the vehicle for mass audiences. In 1963, 'Tetsuwan Atomu' *Astro Boy* (Tezuka, 1963) began as an animated television series followed by 'Teitei' *Kimba the White Lion* (Tezuka, 1965). Napier (2005) suggested that the television serial format provided animators and designers with the opportunity to develop complicated narratives and extended plots. Television attracted new talent as Hollywood films were dominating cinemas in Japan and Japanese studios were in decline.

During the 1980s, anime films, generally linked to television series, became highly successful. Drazen (2003) noted that, with the growth of American cable television channels in the 1980s, there was suddenly a need to fill airtime to which the pattern of long series with linked story lines provided by anime was well suited

The formulaic approach of requiring a constant output for regular consumption required a mass production process. Industrially, this production mode emerged with a large number of animators generally poorly paid to produce thousands of drawings. However anime was based on existing manga which had developed sophisticated and complex narratives and characterisation over years not months. Many manga series relied on individual 'authors'. Amongst the industrialisation of anime, a respect for individual creativity and innovation was transferred with the printed manga. Although large scale production for a variety of outputs (television, video and film) established the profit, individual directors were encouraged to experiment. This freedom provided opportunities

for several animators to make the jump to director.

This ability to attribute ownership and responsibility to individuals for an anime film contrasts with orthodox animation where the studio collectively takes responsibility and the credit. Individual animators are recognised for their technical contribution (for example, Max Fleischer for the rotoscoping technique in 1917). However there is a collective acknowledgement of the studio or the producers (Hanna-Barbera, Disney, and Pixar) in the production of Hollywood animation. This collective process does not necessarily affect the quality of the output. However, the association within the context of anime of individual films with a creative director, provides the study with the focus for analysing the significance of the 'auteur' director's contribution to anime's development as a new cinematic form. If anime does represent a new genre beyond orthodox animation then the chosen characteristics, consistency of form, cultural influence and individual creativity need to be present across their output and be apparent in their differing approaches to film making.

2.3 Anime in Japanese cultural and economic contexts

Anime scholars beyond Japan have generally been struck by the inventiveness of its output. Lamarre (2009) proposed that anime represented a new technical paradigm for animation, an approach which can be paraphrased as an 'animetic' process challenging the use of more conventional 'cinematism' techniques. Lamarre's research into anime forms a substantive theoretical basis for this study and I outline Lamarre's 'animetic' hypothesis in Chapter 3. The enthusiasm of non-Japanese academics has not always been shared by those in Japan. The cultural philosopher, Hiroki Azuma (1996) expressed

scepticism of the development of anime as a serious film genre thus,

'As the expression of a genre, anime has achieved qualitative subdivisions and quantitative expansion. As is the case with any genre there is in Japanese anime as well the existence of what can only be called anime-like stories with anime-like images - I don't think that we can come up with anything good that's anime-like and high level work.... anime as a genre is dead.' (Azuma, 1996: 10)

However Azuma exempted three directors, Hayao Miyazaki, Mamoru Oshii and Hideaki Anno from this dismissal of mass-produced anime output, particularly the television series 'Shin Seiki Evangerion' *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Anno, 1995). For Azuma, Anno's complex and bleak sci-fi anime represented a break with the text-based films produced by Miyazaki and Oshii. The film used abstract motifs mixed with conventional anime characters to articulate an 'anime-imagination' which went beyond the linear literary narratives of 1980s anime. The development of the dystopian cyberpunk sub-genre underpins one of the most global influences of anime – demonstrated by the enduring popularity of 'AKIRA' (Otomo, 1988). The broader narratives represented in the long running manga and anime series, including the inter-generational struggles between youth and established social hierarchies in Japan, the economic rise of post-war Japan and fear of the apocalypse following the shock of nuclear destruction provide complex narratives.

This study focuses on three anime directors with contrasting styles, Hayao Miyazaki (1941-), the most well-known global anime director; Satoshi Kon (1963-2010), a director who successfully fused Eastern and Western elements in his work, and Mamoru Oshii (1951-), a director who challenges conventional attitudes to both animation and cinematism in his work.

Several academics including Lamarre (2009) and Azuma (2009) make the

connection between the representation of form in anime with the growth of 'otaku' culture and attitudes within Japanese society. Otaku translates loosely as a person who stays at home. In Japan, this term describes a socially isolated individual who is more interested in communicating with technology than people. A social phenomenon since the 1980s, otaku are generally male and their anti-social behaviour is perceived as being deeply concerning for families and society as a whole. Although generally used as a derogatory term, it has a broader significance in anime studies as representing an interesting consumerist perspective which blurs the distinction between consumer and creator. Lamarre connected the visual device of the exploded view used by anime to the otaku viewpoint in that,

'the otaku is not a fixed subject who consumes anime objects or patronizes the anime world. The otaku is an interactor...a cooperator in the production and promotion of the expanding world" (Lamarre, 2009:153).

The otaku individual has a variety of views rather than having a rigid attitude, in the same way that an anime image has many moving layers of perspectives.

The sense of anime now being part of the 'real' world rather than a 'different' world can be seen in a new phenomenon, 'anime pilgrimage' to Japanese locations associated with anime series which appears to appeal mostly to young males (Okamoto, 2009). An Asian perspective offered by Tze-Yue (2010) acknowledged the imaginative input of otaku reflected by 'tensions, gaps, eccentricities, fantasies and causes of desires' (Tze-Yue, 2010:162).

Miyadai (2011) adopted a more systematic approach to de-construct otaku behaviours and attitudes. His approach drew inferences from how fans perceive the relationship between themselves and their chosen texts, and changes in Japanese society. The contrast between the weak on-screen personalities of some female anime characters

and their actual powerful social influence is noted as evidence of how fans drive macro changes. Miyadai provides a useful new framing of anime and otaku in terms of the distinction between 'living' in fictional worlds as though they were real and living in the real world in gaming terms. Thus have the virtual and actual worlds become functionally indistinguishable?

On the other hand, Cavallaro (2012) argued that the use of magic as a metaphor for change in anime reflected a wider trope of cultural response to transformational change. It is possible to extrapolate from this hypothesis the attempts by Japanese society to respond both to the need to meet the 'unknown' (represented by fantasy worlds) of a new technological society since the 1980s, and of the need for individuals to acquire maturity to remain in harmony in a changing world. This is an interesting proposal in relation to environmental influences on the works of Hayao Miyazaki and I return to this point in Chapter 5.

It is inevitable that a study of anime will encounter debate around racial stereotyping following the end of the Second World War in 1945. The negative perception of Japan and Japanese culture builds on a deeper neo-colonial attitude famously criticised by Edward Said in his seminal work 'Orientalism' (Said, 1975). Said de-constructed Western colonial attitudes to the Middle East and Asia, arguing that Asian culture had been misinterpreted to fit into Western views of their superiority over their colonial subjects. These attitudes had, in turn, coloured Western views of Japan. Although Said was mainly concerned with Western views of the Middle East and Islam, his basic premise was that Western writers both demonstrated their lack of knowledge and their feelings of superiority through their written comments.

The potential for misinterpretation highlighted by Said can be seen in the work of cultural anthropologist, Ruth Benedict. Her book, 'The Chrysanthemum and the Sword' (Benedict, 1946) was influential in setting the tone of American attitudes to the occupation of Japan after 1945. The first sentence of her book emphasised the importance of difference. 'The Japanese were the most alien enemy the United States had ever fought' (Ben-Ami, 1997: 8). 'She identified that the 'group' was much more important in Japanese society than the individual. This group culture led to a major difference between America and Japan where America is motivated by a guilt culture (i.e. the guilt of the individual) but Japan was motivated by a shame culture (not to lose face before members of the group). Benedict's work has been criticised as not being based on any direct contact with Japanese culture and being driven by her own stance on the importance of personality traits in determining general cultural behaviour. Her significance lies mainly in the influence of her work on post-war Western attitudes.

In economic terms, despite the growth of a global animation industry, the success of anime is based on firm technical foundations in Japan. The anime industry includes original printed manga, DVDs, Original Video Animation (OVAs), computer games and interactive user networks. Japan is the world's largest producer of electronic media, and 'keiretsu' or groups of vertically or horizontally integrated companies traditionally control production, such as the Mitsui keiretsu which includes Sony. As previously mentioned, although television anime does not usually make a profit, the accompanying DVDs and merchandise provide the required funding to enable an investment in new films. The Japanese market for anime is also based on a long tradition of customers of all ages buying manga which provides the sustainable market, lowering the risk when new

investment is made in overseas markets. Even in Japan the profitable segment of the market is the adult 'hentai' anime which cannot be shown on television until late at night. This restriction impacts on the visibility of the product far more than previously where the output was targeting a broader audience range.

The recent world recession which has affected the Japanese anime industry quite significantly also provides barriers for new creative industries. The labour intensive method of hand producing drawings requires a large workforce. In 2009, average annual salaries for animators were around £6,700 for long hours of work. During a recession there is the danger of losing specialist skills as staff are forced to look for other jobs. In Japan, the task of producing the original handmade drawings which create the distinct anime visual iconography is increasingly being outsourced to China, weakening the future supply of trained animators as their route into the industry disappears. Television anime is finding it hard to attract advertisers and unofficial file sharing sites are weakening the global anime market. Fans no longer buy the official DVD or download if it can be easily obtained, often with fansubs, from online fandoms. Yet it is the sale of the DVD and associated merchandise which provides the studio's profit. There is a danger that participatory culture will strangle the object of its desires. The very recent rise of official downloading sites such as Crunchyroll.com (which previously included some unauthorised downloads) represents the industry's attempt to find a business model which acknowledges the domination of digital markets for anime audiences.

These economic challenges do not detract from the emergence of anime as a powerful representation of modern Japan, technologically advanced and 'cool' in cultural terms. The significance of this development for global cinematic tradition provides the

context for this study.

2.4 Anime's global role beyond Japan

In terms of previous research, varying views of anime's role in global cinematic terms have emerged. Harindranath (2003) proposed that non-Japanese influences suppressed anime's development (demonstrating the 'orientalism' which Edward Said proposed coloured Western perspectives of Eastern culture). Jenkins (2004), on the other hand, proposed that anime provided an important mechanism for the global development of 'pop cosmopolitans', embracing cultural difference and seeking to consume new experiences within their own cultural contexts. A further factor in the discourse on the effects of global visibility was identified by Hills (2002) as semiotic solidarity where viewers reach a shared understanding of their consumption of cultural products through interactive international fandoms, popular in digital anime networks. This potential independence from any hegemony of Hollywood in determining the consumption of anime is further examined in Chapter 4.

The increase in the global audience size and reach for anime has been attributed to the many anime sub-genres which target a broad range of audiences. In addition, the very different and varied distribution systems via new media, television and DVD enabled a rapid visibility of anime in comparison to conventional cinematic forms. Jenkins (2006) attributed the increasing visibility to a growth in participatory culture where audiences expect to have an influential role in the creative process through the opportunities provided by interactive media. This approach draws on Tomlinson's (1999) interpretation of global culture as being something adapted from another distinct culture which changes everyday

life. Yet, in terms of cultural exchange, Drazen (2003) observed that initially Japanese anime was never intended for export and therefore primarily represents Japanese cultural myths and social behaviour.

The distinguished anime scholar Susan Napier summarised the importance of anime in that it 'celebrates difference and transcends it creating a new kind of artistic space' (Napier, 2001: 34). For Napier, the attraction of anime to American fans appears to be as much about 'otherness' as it is about 'Japanese-ness'. Different in this context appears to be something which is not Hollywood or mainstream rather than a clear statement of the uniqueness of Japanese culture.

Napier (2005) contrasted the form of anime with traditional Hollywood genres which reflect the cinema of reassurance i.e. where the expected happens – a resolution of conflicts, secure contexts for the audience. Anime represents the cinema of de-assurance. The narratives are complicated and often based on philosophical or moral dilemmas. Fear is a constant context – fear for the future, technology, the apocalypse. Where there is resolution (often in dystopian contexts) it is often tragic and open-ended. Napier suggested that part of the appeal of anime lies in the uncertainty of the film contexts mirroring the uncertainty of people's lives in a global society.

However, is the notion of 'other' in fact as neutral as Napier suggests, or is the appeal of anime to Western audiences to some extent based on Japanese cultural visual tradition? In a detailed study of the impact of 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001) in Japan, France and America, Denison (2007) challenged Napier's approach of focusing on anime as the 'other' in its global impact. Denison suggested that aspects of anime which were consumed by audiences outside Japan do so as specifically

Japanese elements rather than being seen as an 'alternative' culture. Denison's view may be interpreted as an example of Tomlinson's hypothesis where global culture relates to 'how our sense of cultural belonging... may be subtly transfigured by the penetration of globalizing media into our everyday life.' (Tomlinson, 1999: 10). There is an interesting relationship between anime's ability to react to localised cultural expectations of animation texts beyond Japan and emerging theories of 'glocalisation' (Levi, 2006). The inter-relationship between national cinematic forms such as Japanese anime and global cinematic requirements is well reflected in the discourse around glocalisation (Coe, 2000) where the local and global collide and interact. I return to perspectives of anime within and beyond Japan in Chapter 4.

The semiotic significance of 'Japanese-ness' for anime relates directly to the perception of 'otaku' culture outside Japan (Hills, 2002). It is a matter of debate whether the various signifiers for Japanese culture in anime are understood by Western otaku fans. A survey identified that 30% of American otaku fans did not understand the specifically Japanese motifs (Napier, 2005). Hills disagreed with Napier's comments that "it is the 'otherness' of anime rather than its specific 'Japanese-ness' that is one of its fundamental appeals to the fans." (Napier, 2005: p.255). The creative nature of fandoms is such that individuals are mentored from a position of ignorance to one of knowledge through their membership of anime networks.

Napier (2005) proposed that the reason that audiences, from children to adults, respond to anime can be found in its lack of visual cultural context – stories are moral (and often violent) without being linked to a particular cultural identity. Characters are often not of a clear gender stereotype – male and female look alike, girls are often very strong

action characters even if they look very feminine. The vagueness of racial and gender roles makes anime therefore visually very different from the Hollywood cartoon tradition. This perspective echoed Drazen's (2003) comments regarding the apparent lack of a strong Asian feel to the features of the drawn characters. The non-racial or ethnic approach would suggest that visually the look of many anime films makes their acceptance by global audiences easier (Drazen, 2003).

Modern perspectives with an echo of the 'difference' of anime include Patten's (2004) analysis of the early confusion of terminology amongst his contemporaries in describing anime. He observed that in the 1980s a growing academic interest in cartoons led to the more generic term 'animation' to be preferred. This led to the term Japanese animation, shortened to 'Japanimation' being used by early fan clubs. By the early 1990s the term anime had replaced Japanimation except for some of the early fan clubs such as the Boston Japanimation Society. He implied that the term may have had a racial aspect as 'Jap' animation, seen as a term of abuse which also may have led to the Japanese word 'anime' replacing 'Japanimation' in the United States.

Patten further described the initial attraction of anime for American audiences from his experiences as an importer of manga books in 1972 when managing a science fiction bookshop in Los Angeles. In 1980 Patten was one of the organisers who invited Osamu Tezuka to the fifteenth anniversary of the Comic-Con event in Los Angeles for science fiction and comic books. In an article written in 1994 Patten wrote ' I do not think that the American audience for these films is nearly as interested in the fact that they were made in Japan, or that they are cartoons, as that they are exciting SF adventures.' (Patten, 2004: 20) Clearly for Patten the cultural elements related not to unique Japanese signifiers, but

rather to a more generic love of science fiction as a genre and the powerful influence of animation as a film medium for all ages not just children.

However MacWilliams (2008) identified that attitudes are changing. Due to the increased exposure to the Japanese language and culture provided by anime, global otaku fans are both more knowledgeable and represent new types of audiences. He recalled buying groceries in a remote rural town in Georgia where the working class assistant had adopted a Japanese name and used digital social networks to discuss her interest with other fans outside of her own community.

Levi (2006) studied the tension between American fans who follow anime because it represents 'Japanese-ness' and those who perceived anime (particularly science fiction anime) as part of a global genre. She noted the rapid growth in popularity of anime in the 1990s in America and assessed the influence of anime fandoms on the distribution of anime films, including the translation debates relating to 'fansubs' – English translations of the original Japanese soundtrack.

Fansubs directly relate to the issue of whether anime films should only be viewed in their original form if translations interfere with artistic integrity. Adopting Bennett's (2004) developmental model of inter-cultural competence as a framework for assessing whether American fans actually perceive anime films as 'Japanese', Levi found that the results were not clear cut. Although superficially it appears that anime has achieved the first stages of Bennett's model, Levi proposed that fans do not know enough about Japanese culture and society to actually understand the entire experience. They therefore still had a restricted view of the original creative intent.

Levi (2001) outlined the cultural confusion which was generated when the anime

series 'Bishojo Senshi' *Sailor Moon* (Sato, 1992-1997) was distributed globally. In Japan, the main character is Princess Tsukino (or rabbit) from a Japanese folk story of a rabbit which lives on the moon. Tsukino has a cat called Luna. Not unnaturally, there are many rabbit and moon jokes in the series. In America she is called Serena and there is no mention of rabbits, and in Germany, France and Italy she is called Bunny but no references are made to the moon. The original meaning has therefore been lost in the transfer of 'Bishojo Senshi' to the West.

The original 'Bishojo Senshi' series was shown dubbed alongside children's cartoons and received very low ratings in America. The series was then re-pitched at teenage and adult audiences and became extremely popular. It attracted a cult following amongst university students. The original manga and anime were complex and full of references to Japanese mythology. The motif of magic girls transforming into goddesses to save the world is a popular one. The girls wore sailor type uniforms (common in Japanese schools) when not trying to save the world. However, problems started when perfectly normal cultural devices in Japan were shown in other countries. The romantic friendship between two of the girls caused problems for distributors in Mexico and America. American audiences also had problems when many of the characters died and became spirits. Spirits which retained all the energy and abilities of their original owners did not match the cultural expectations of ghosts in America, unlike Japanese culture where spirits and humans commonly live side by side.

In the United Kingdom recognition of anime as a new genre followed the premiere of 'AKIRA' (Otomo, 1988) at the Bristol and London Film Festivals in 1990. Previous anime had been bought by television companies since the 1960s, however, after being dubbed

by American actors, there was little to associate series such as 'Marine Boy' and 'Battle of the Planets' with Japan. McCarthy (2001) noted the higher instances of violent behaviour in these early imports compared to other home-produced animation around at the time. Another notable contrast to contemporary animation such as 'Captain Scarlet' (Anderson, 1967) was that the heroes of the anime series were children not adults. The rapid growth of the video rental, and then the home video market in the 1980s, provided new opportunities to bypass the restricted perspective of the television stations that all cartoons were for children. Occasional fan magazines such as 'Robotech' (established in 1987) appeared. Existing sci-fi conventions such as Eastercon discovered anime - in 1990 thirty seven hours of imported anime including a copy of 'AKIRA' were shown. In terms of numbers however, this was still a minority interest, the first anime newsletter, Anime UK only had around two hundred subscribers in 1991.

'AKIRA's association with cyberpunk struck a chord in the 1990s. Island Records, acquired all the media rights and anime became accepted a medium for adult stories. Manga Video aggressively targeted young males who were likely to be familiar with comic books with an emphasis on sex and violence. It took twenty years for a broader interest in anime to result in Miyazaki's films being nominated for Oscars and anime and manga to be tagged as separate genres in record stores and bookshops.

In continental Europe anime had a similar slow growth until the end of the twentieth century. In France, anime became popular after the success of 'UFO Robo Gurendaiza' *Goldorak* (Nagai, 1975-1977) on French children's television. By 1993 there were two dedicated television channels showing anime series (McCarthy, 2001). Some anime versions of French classic literature such as 'Les Miserables' by Victor Hugo were

produced. Any concerns regarding anime content in France were focused on scenes which were culturally inappropriate in European terms, for example, parents and children bathing together in 'Tonari no Totoro' *My Neighbor Totoro* (Miyazaki, 1988). This anime was similarly criticised in America. Miyazaki however refused to cut the scenes which were perfectly acceptable in Japanese cultural terms. Dolle-Weinkauff (2009) observed that Japanese manga and anime was a significant influence on young people in Germany, particularly on girls who traditionally avoided comic book stories. Japanese subjects and motifs increasingly formed the subject matter of stories produced by girls.

Denison (2007) concluded that the commercial success of 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki, 2001) was partially due the deal struck with Disney to distribute the film globally. In this context, the film could therefore be described as a global phenomenon rather than a Japanese cultural product. Adopting Tomlinson's (1999) hypothesis of the relationship between globalisation and culture, Denison analysed the marketing and distribution of the film in America, Japan and France. The aim was to identify whether the text created a fantasy of Japan rather than illustrating its real society and culture.

Her conclusion that the film should be categorised as 'global' rather than 'stateless' challenged Napier's (2001) description of anime as essentially culturally neutral. Denison emphasised the subtly different versions produced for Japan, America and France to support Tomlinson's 'glocalisation' model where the inherent 'Japanese-ness' of the original is retained but packaged for the local context so that spectators can better relate to the film. For example, two language versions were produced for the French release, one a dubbed version for audiences unfamiliar with Japanese conventions and the other with

French subtitles for French otaku audiences desiring to experience the original work. In America, by contrast, the film was promoted for the excellence of its English dubbed-version not the beauty of its imagery. The assumption being that American audiences would need to connect with American actors to lessen the sense of 'other' generated by the plot and visual themes.

I examine how far an exposure to global audiences influences anime narratives in later chapters through close readings of specific texts. When considering the concept of global participatory culture in the age of media convergence, Jenkins (1992) proposed that anime and manga demonstrated that audiences create their own frameworks outside of the traditional studio system. He argued that spectators are not passive, easily influenced viewers, but are instead active participants who develop their own set of rules when interacting with one another on online anime networks. He outlined a new paradigm, 'participatory culture', to study spectators' attitudes and behaviours in the digital age. Participatory film culture as demonstrated by interactive anime networks is developing a new creative form. This form is self-supporting, intuitive and empowering. As with the children in anime films, young people who role play in anime networks create their own authority and identities. Anime stories can be creatively enhanced and developed beyond the capacity (and perhaps the interest) of the original creator.

Condry (2013) described this co-creation between producers and consumers as the 'soul of anime', where a dynamic social energy drives the success of the product across media and beyond Japan. From an ethnographic viewpoint, the significance of anime is primarily not in its commercial value, rather in the power of the creative process for binding director, studio, merchandise producer, media distributor and fan together in a complex

commentary on contemporary society, both through the legal products and the illegal derivative texts. Condry proposes that anime therefore represents a new social form, with relationships facilitated by Internet communities. This form is global in its conceptual state, not necessarily a product of 'Japanese-ness' although Condry acknowledges the significance of its Japanese origin. The global relationship between studio and fans is complicated by commercial issues of copyright. He notes that studios do not generally recruit staff from the creators of illegal derivative texts but prefer to develop their own animators, thereby reinforcing the divide between 'official' and 'unofficial'. A view shared by Prough (2011). Although it could be argued that one of the major anime studios, Gainax, originated as a collaboration of otaku (including Hideaki Anno) in 1981. Condry provides an interesting cultural perspective on the global development of anime, with a paradigm which places creative passion for anime as the unifying force between diverse interest groups, rather than any purely capitalist intent.

Jenkins (2006) identified the benefits of convergence for both the spectator and the production company, he acknowledged that 'fandom' can be a threat to artistic and creative integrity if the spectator begins to dictate the development of plots and characters. He quoted the activities of the Survivor Spoilers, a group who successfully revealed the content of episodes of the television series '*Survivor*' (Parsons, 2000 -) when it first appeared in 2000. Ultimately their activities influenced the development of the series. He also identified the tension between spectators and commercial interests and referenced a situation when Harry Potter fans were threatened with legal action over fan websites.

Nornes (2007) pointed out the dangers and the benefits of film translations, particularly when unauthorised amateur translators clash with purists in the interpretation

of the original work. This is an area where O'Hagan (2006) had also researched in relation to the specific problem of successfully translating anime. Rodriguez (2012) examined the various modes of mediation (translation, subtitling and dubbing) in multi-modal versions of anime translated into Catalan. She identified the resulting artificiality of producing dubbed text in a language dominated by oral tradition. Jenkins himself was fairly uncritical of the output of fan-based content – the energy and enthusiasm for him is more significant than the quality of the output. The whole research area of consuming anime in multi-modal versions through languages other than English is not well developed. However, it is a relevant area for this study when considering the significance of anime as a form which influences approaches to animation in global digital environments. Is anime becoming a global product, a mediated product or does it remain intrinsically a Japanese cultural product in digital environments?

The popularity of other mediated cultural forms such as cosplay (costume play), film conventions and fandom clubs is particularly characteristic of anime. Commercial products – magazines, music DVDs and models have grown dramatically since the 1990s (Patten, 2001). In 1978, following Tezuka's attendance at the C/FO Convention (Cartoon/ Fantasy Organisation) the visibility of anime films increased. This visibility was accompanied by a need to translate and interpret the Japanese script and song lyrics, and anime fan clubs rapidly appeared. Patten (2001) noted that the interest in fantasy role playing during the 1980s in America and Europe was helpful to anime in this respect. This was extended in the 1990s by computer games and video consoles, most of which were manufactured by Japanese companies. Atkins (2006) proposed that when anime also encompassed video games (as many do) this introduced a 'game gaze' which differed from the 'cinema gaze' in

that the video gaze has distinct qualities where the player not the spectator directs 'what happens next' as 'what happens next if... .' This aspect introduces interesting conflicts for the creator in blending the animation with the expectations of the associated video game. However the approach is well suited to the expectations of otaku fans who expect to be able to influence proceedings and mediate narratives.

The case of '*The Matrix*' (Wachowski, 1999) is interesting for the multi-media franchise which developed across feature films, video games, anime films and manga comics. The creation of a self-supporting new multi-modal alternative world is now well established in Japan as a franchise associated with the original manga and anime. The Matrix was influenced by the creative idea and the franchise of 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (Oshii, 1995). Jenkins (2006) suggested that that this approach can be termed as 'transmedia storytelling' where 'storytelling has become the art of world building' (Jenkins, 2006: 114). In fact the second and third feature films do not make sense to the spectator unless they have also visited the website, viewed the anime films and read the manga comics. The series created a large committed fan base which not only consumed the multimedia content but also developed a new Matrix 'world' of online gaming with new characters and plots.

On the other hand, using the example of '*Final Fantasy: The Spirits Within*' (Sakaguchi,2001), Lamarre (2006) highlighted Manovich's (2001) view that digital film media has yet to demonstrate that it is significantly different to the effects produced by analogue film media. These commentators did not share Jenkins' optimism of the growing influence of online fandoms. The relative decline of anime consumption beyond Japan in the present century would seem to support this view, although economic rather than

cultural factors appear to be dominant in this decline after the global crash in 2008. At best this represented 10% of the global market for anime, therefore the Japanese anime market provides a better holistic viewpoint of anime's recent development. The decline of printed manga and the introduction of interactive e-versions for smartphones provides an interesting new context to consider anime's likely impact in multi-modal digital environments.

The use of anime to introduce Japanese language and culture to Western audiences was extensively studied by Williams (2006). She observed the difficulty of introducing complex puns and meanings to a non-Japanese speaking audience. In this global distribution network, can anime still reflect Japanese culture or is a hybrid medium being created which reflects an artificial reality – the Western audience's perception of Japanese culture (based on an inevitably restricted view) rather than the one understood by a Japanese audience? This overview has identified that even when anime output has been modified for local consumption outside of Japan, the core Japanese signifiers have been retained, if not fully understood by the global audience. Anime is no longer automatically re-packaged to become culturally neutral so as not to offend local taste.

More recently, the Japanese government has used anime to promote 'soft nationalism' (Iwabuchi, 2002) or a positive view of Japan and Japanese culture by other countries (Kinsella, 2000). The translation of 'Captain Tsubasa' (Takahashi, 1981) into Arabic as 'Captain Majed' in the 1990s made the television series very popular in the Middle East. The story of Tsubasa who wants to be a famous football player was used by Japanese coalition forces in Iraq in an attempt at cultural diplomacy to connect with Iraqi children. MacWilliams (2008) highlights the difficulties of retaining original meaning when

works such as 'Captain Tsubasa' are adapted for foreign consumption and translated. Unlike McDonald's 'Ronald' character's association with America, the translation of Captain Tsubasa into Captain Majed does not necessarily retain 'Japanese-ness'.

Iwabuchi (2002) argued that the success of anime in global terms is due to the fact that it 'leaves its use-value to consumer tastes and cultural traditions outside Japan' (Iwabuchi, 2002: 242). 'Appurushido' *Appleseed* (Aramaki, 2004) is an example of an anime film which reflected several cultural traditions. Set in 2131, Knute battles various warriors with names from Greek and Japanese traditions in a city named Olympus run by a computer, Gaia. MacWilliams (2008) refers to these films as culturally odourless – anime which can be viewed globally with no required understanding of Japanese culture. This is an associated viewpoint to Napier's concept of anime as the 'other' or culturally neutral.

This definition of being either culturally 'odourless' or 'fragrant' was examined by Jenkins (2006) in relation to '*Iron Chef*' (Kanaka, 1993-1999), a Japanese television cooking contest. The programme became a cult success in America even though the original Japanese was retained with subtitles. The television network decided to make a new series, but with the well-known actor William Shatner as the new chairman instead of the Japanese compere. It was a ratings disaster as viewers clearly associated the programme with the exotic 'fragrance' of the original culture not with a home grown substitute. Jenkins concluded that foreign cultures do not have to be made culturally 'odourless' to succeed in America and that anime has prepared the ground for an acceptance of Japanese media amongst a growing audience base.

MacWilliams (2008) proposed that the change to a more proactive approach by the Japanese government is associated with internal discussion within Japan about

'Japanese-ness' or 'nihonjinron'. This concept loosely translates as the theory of the Japanese people – including ideas of race, identity, nationalism and Japan's external relationships. Authors have debated whether 'nihonjinron' is part of a deep Japanese psyche or a reaction to Western hegemony. Revell (1997) proposed that the concept only focuses on cultural difference from the West because of the obsession of the West with cultural difference. Many of the most popular books in Japan pre-war were Western translations, including the Victorian writer Samuel Smiles. Moeran (1989) argued that 'nihonjinron' represented a Japanese reaction to Western attitudes but not in the way described by Said. Japan is seeking a position of strength in international relations based not on military might but on economic power.

Morris-Suzuki (1988) viewed 'nihonjinron' as a process to articulate a growing cultural 'nationalism'. For example, there was considerable debate within Japan in 1994 over claims that Disney's 'Lion King' (Allers, 1994) was a plagiarised copy of Tezuka's anime 'Janguru Taitei' *Kimba, the White Lion* (Tezuka, 1965). I return to the relationship between 'nihonjinron' and the development of anime in Chapter 4.

The success of gifted directors such as Hayao Miyazaki, who is capable of bringing an additional richness to his work through the adoption of other cultural traditions, demonstrates a new Japanese confidence in creative thinking in anime. Although anime is essentially still produced for a home market, its future may also depend on attracting a bigger share of the global market, and the financial support of global audiences and producers.

The global growth of anime in the last ten years demonstrates an appetite for innovative animation which can be interactively linked to digital media. The challenges for

any nation considering entering this potentially lucrative market are considerable. In a study of anime otaku, Napier (2001) identified that when asked what attracted them to anime, 70% chose the quality of the animation. The next most popular response was the emotion demonstrated by the animation in comparison with what was perceived to be the superficiality of Disney. Innately Japanese signifiers were not highlighted by the fans as a particular reason for interest in the film.

Anime multi-modal products also demonstrate that a broad range of themes and sub-genres which extend beyond the traditional targeting of children attract new interested audiences. The associated interactive anime networks enable fans to discuss their particular favourites with like-minded individuals on a world-wide basis. The inaccessibility of the Japanese language and lack of knowledge of social conventions to many in the West do not appear to be major barriers, with fans soon providing amateur translations if distribution companies are slow to provide subtitles or dubbed versions. Williams (2006) found that an interest in anime was a good motivator for individuals to learn Japanese to better understand original works.

Apart from demonstrating the difficulties of developing and sustaining a home-grown animation industry, what does the anime experience demonstrate in terms of creative output? Here perhaps the story is more encouraging. The focus on stories which demand the attention of its audience beyond a superficial visual experience is demonstrated by the critical success of directors such as Miyazaki, Oshii and Kon. There is a global audience which finds such animation culturally 'fragrant' (as defined by Iwabuchi, 2002). Even though a lack of understanding of the language and social conventions will restrict the totality of the experience, anime demonstrates that enough is retained to make such films

'fragrant' not 'odourless'. Although the emphasis in Napier's early work focused on anime's role as the 'other', this overview demonstrates that the evidence increasingly shows that, in recent years, anime has become mainstream for its 'Japanese-ness'.

In 2008, Disney announced a partnership with Japanese animation studios to produce anime in Japanese for sale in Japan and abroad. This acknowledgement by a major Hollywood studio, the dominant global influence in animation, is evidence that anime was becoming a commercially valuable element of the World Film genre. The ease with which anime became a digital franchise product and its rapid rise in social networking websites, which require creative products to discuss and share, also contributed to the suitability of anime as a creative film medium for the digital age.

In the broader context of cultural consumption, Okayama & Ricatti (2005) claimed that anime forms part of a global interest in Japanese pop culture, described as 'J-pop'. For example the 'Tokidoki' brand designed by Legno who took his inspiration from the depiction of Japanese young girls in anime and manga. Ueno (2002) proposed that interest in anime by non-Japanese audiences forms part of a changing globalised system of information capitalism where the association of animation with American cartoons (via Disney) has been replaced with J-cult, covering karaoke bars, anime, restaurants, the 'Hello Kitty' brand of 'moe' or 'cute' anime amongst others. He cited Bandai Visual as a typical global company established in 1983 which had successfully developed branded stores as well as merchandise around Japanese films and culture. The success of the nostalgic childhood fantasy, 'Tonari no Totoro' *My Neighbor Totoro* (Miyazaki, 1988) further developed global interest in the 1990s.

J-pop brand was not the sole external representative of anime in the 1980s. Adult

manga and anime with an emphasis on violence and sex proved popular, particularly in the United States, and led to a minor moral panic where anime somehow represented a dangerous cinematic development (Drazen, 2003).

However it is important to keep a sense of proportion in placing anime as a major force within global cinematic tradition. Even after thirty years the success of anime as a mainstream film product is limited. Although the rise from being a little-known animation form in the early 1980s outside Japan has been exponentially rapid, Hollywood-based Pixar's animation films outsell anime films by a significant amount (in 2005, Business Week magazine estimated that Pixar's gross sales for that year was 274 million dollars compared to Production I.G, producers of 'Kokaku Kidotai' *The Ghost in the Shell* (Oshii, 1995) which were 52 million dollars). This limited commercial success in traditional cinematic terms can be compared to the fact that an estimated 60% of all forms of global broadcast animation consistently consists of anime and anime's increasing influence online can be found beyond the sale of DVDs and cinema attendance (Brown, 2006).

Whereas anime's development in the twenty first century has been stimulated by digital environments, in the 1980s when anime emerged beyond Japan, the transmedial product was represented by toys. The commercial success of the Takara Company's Transformers warrior robots toy products in the 1980s was based on mecha(nical) anime even though the resulting creative toy was largely shaped by the commercial requirements of the American toy industry. The avid consumers of the commercial product in the 1980s, playing with Transformers, could probably be excused from appreciating the significance of the discourse around the relationship between technology and humanity which underpins mecha anime. A Hollywood version released as a live action film, '*Transformers*' (Bay,

2007) had a remote relationship with its Japanese original.

The explosive success of 'Pokémon' (a shortened form of Pocket Monsters) in the 1990s was another example of a successful export from Japan which originated from anime. The creative concept was built on a schoolboy tradition in Japan of matching 'monsters' in a fight. The resulting video games and anime made Pokémon a global brand which was enthusiastically taken up outside Japan. However, similar to the experience of Transformers, the significance of much of the cultural references was literally lost in translation. The twenty first century equivalent in terms of multi-modal forms has continued to produce toys and related merchandise. However, digital forms provide the most interesting examples of a tendency for convergence between the cinematic form and other more interactive forms.

The influence of anime on graphic novel authors beyond Japan has been noted by Henry Jenkins (2013). In an extended interview with David Mack, a successful author for Marvel comics, the significant influence of Japanese visual conventions was discussed. Daliot-Bul (2013) raised interesting conclusions from an economic study of the decline of anime shown on American television in this century. He proposed that anime's acceptance as part of the mainstream rather than as a novel cultural form has precipitated the decline as audiences move on to the next new experience.

An increasing amount of research conducted by academics in Japan has appeared in English in recent years. Seminal work by the philosopher Hiroki Azuma (2009) on Japanese otaku and the important relationship between the development of anime and cinematic traditions in Eastern Asia published by G Hu Tze-Yue (2010) represent the growing evidence base which extends and challenge accepted world views. My research

assumptions acknowledge these differing world views and the opportunities thus provided for establishing a framework for anime's place in new trans-medial contexts.

2.5 Technical features of anime within animation

Accepting that printed manga is the inspiration for most anime films, its composition is interesting in the way that manga spreads the narration over several images as an analytical montage which lends itself to adaptation for moving animation as anime (Rommens, 2000). In addition, there is less text in manga books compared to Western comic books which again helps the transfer to cinematic techniques. Tezuka's classic manga work, 'Hi No Tori' *Phoenix*, (1967-88) demonstrated this sequence of different images which almost replicate different camera angles in a cinematic work.

There are also differences in the technical creative processes between Hollywood-based animation and anime. Miyazaki, for example, generally draws his animation first, often without a script, and then adds dialogue. This approach contrasts with the typical Hollywood approach of drawing the animation after recording the dialogue. The focus on a particularly Japanese visual presentation results in a distinctive style which distinguishes it from conventional animation. The visual aesthetic which underpins this creative process forms a second research area for the study.

Since the 1990s, anime has embraced technology both in its creative content themes and in its production processes. The commercial success of anime led to the adoption of sophisticated 3-D digital animation which replaced handmade coloured drawings. The digital re-working of 2-D animation, for example, 'Mononoke Hime' *Princess Mononoke* (Miyazaki, 1999) also represented an increasing sophistication in the making of

anime. Proven staff expertise in Asia was a significant factor, together with cheaper production costs, in accounting for the increase in the outsourcing of Hollywood animation. Initially based in South Korea, Hanna-Barbera now has studios in Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and India (Lent, 2001).

In global terms, since the 1990s anime has embraced interactive forms from computer gaming to websites. Internet fansubs where original Japanese versions are translated through crowd sourcing demonstrate the appeal of anime beyond the original audience. This convergence of form, through mainly digital media, provided new opportunities for anime studios to construct a franchise around popular characters. Conversely, interactive media poses a potential threat to the economic viability of the anime industry through illegal file sharing. The evidence for this assumption was challenged by a study which demonstrated that illegal downloads led to a greater increase of DVD sales as audiences sampled new series and sought more (Tanaka, 2011).

The block-buster animation films produced by Pixar, now a subsidiary company owned by Disney, and others have raised the bar still higher since 2001. Pixar uses a CGI system, Photorealistic Renderman, to produce the animation. This process alone requires multi-million dollar budgets for each film. Even Pixar, which made 2.5 billion dollars gross sales on its first five films, has almost gone out of business twice. In such a competitive market, what lessons does the anime experience provide? The high quality animation produced by traditional animation (which can be enhanced by CGI techniques) used by Studio Ghibli for example, demonstrates that skilled animators are capable of competing with the sophisticated CGI output of the large Hollywood studios in terms of visual quality.

Darley (2000) proposed a new discourse for animation in advanced digital

environments, namely, 'spectacle aesthetic' to describe the 'wow' factor produced by improvements in CGI technology. He argued that this should not be viewed as a new approach. It is instead the latest version of the response of viewers to new ways of projecting cinematic images that has formed part of film tradition since the early days of cinema. Darley therefore argued that anime's emergence as a 'new' form of visual digital culture in the 1960s disguised the fundamental link with existing film tradition. Any claim that its progression into new multi-modal forms represents a discontinuity with the past therefore need to be critically considered.

Darley's theory emphasised the significance of style, form and surface features instead of content in anime's position in digital visual culture. It also borrowed from Umberto Eco's (1986) description of 'post-modern aesthetics' in the way that ideas re-purpose existing statements rather than formulate new empirical thoughts. A traditional Japanese aesthetic 'utsushi' embodies this desire to emulate and improve an existing work (Cox, 2007). Unlike the associations associated with 'forgery' in Western art, 'utsushi' represents an appreciation of the mastery of the original. Darley's description of the re-creation of the original entity through the industrial mass production which underpins digital animation is a more determinist approach. Darley provides an interesting contrast to Lamarre's (2009) differing interpretation of the anime production process which emphasises the novelty of its approach compared to Hollywood animation.

Besides its portrayal of visual culture, the choice and use of sound and music, audio and sound in new digital forms provides opportunities to analyse anime's place in animation as a creative form. Munday (2007) proposed that digital games have inspired new approaches with conventions for the use of sound, namely, environmental sounds as

signifiers for space, deep sounds for emotions and diegetic sounds to accompany the narrative. The relationship between the player of the game and the passive spectator of the anime is based on the differing experiences of both. The gamer controls the look and feel and sounds of the game, taking the role of the director. As Munday notes, 'the game doesn't know where the music is, and the music doesn't know where the game is' (Munday, 2007: 164). This leaves an interesting question, how much of the original intent can be present when such a degree of control is ceded by the original director?

Therefore from the origins of anime to its development into a global cultural phenomenon, anime has attracted academic interest both within Japan and externally. However, there have been few studies which attempt to place anime within the film tradition of animation and assess its significance. This study attempts to address this deficit.

Chapter 3: The Methodology of the Study

How on earth did animation become anime in Japan? (Tze-Yue, 2009:12)

3.1 Introduction

As a potential novel approach for animation in a digital age, anime represents a particular challenge in the choice of a suitable methodology for the study. In conducting a study which is investigating anime in a holistic way, rather than focusing on particular elements, I consider the advantages and disadvantages of adopting more than one methodology for collecting and interpreting the data. I also consider which appropriate theoretical approach best suited the requirements of the study.

3.2 The theoretical basis for the study

All effective empirical research is based on a thorough literature review of previous research which can be used to identify those areas of research requiring further study (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). The literature review for this study adopted a detailed approach in investigating textual studies, mostly in English, including texts translated from Japanese, and a few texts in Japanese. Academic interest in anime as a research topic has increased since the 1980s when more anime outputs were shown on television and in arthouse venues beyond Japan. A recent trend is the increase of academic interest in the significance of anime in East Asian cinema, particularly South Korea and China, well documented by Tze-Yue (2009). The literature review identified that few researchers have attempted to adopt a holistic approach with many preferring to focus on individual themes and sub-genres. As previously identified in Chapter 2, there is also an interesting tension

between aesthetic viewpoints depending on whether anime is viewed as part of Western film tradition as a sub-genre of 'animation', or as an integral part (and major element) of Japanese film tradition. In effect, the 'world cinema' viewpoint where external influences on anime are perceived to be less influential. Existing literature demonstrated the focus on cultural identity as an empirical characteristic of anime as an art form. Moreover, this identity has at least two perspectives, from the native Japanese perception of anime and the global non-Japanese response to anime. A third perspective has emerged from Japan's use of anime to sell intrinsically Japanese social values beyond Japan (Lu, 2008).

This study required a strong theoretical framework which could de-construct the importance of aesthetics and culture in film tradition. The starting hypothesis was that anime represents an important novel element in the development of animation as a cinematic form due to its Japanese origins. As multi-modal outputs are characteristic of modern anime, Dinehart's (1996) transmedia theory (see Figure 3: 88) represented a useful way of representing how anime has moved beyond cinematic conventions. A global perspective was also required to examine how far anime's boundaries have been influenced by orthodox animation, and conversely, how far anime influenced the development of animation as a film tradition. The influence of several fields of critical film theory potentially impacted on the aims of the study, including cultural theory, auteur theory and apparatus theory. Hiroki Azuma's database animals hypothesis (Azuma, 2009) demonstrated the influence on anime of social changes in Japan. I was mindful of attempting to fit the research aims of the study within a specific theoretical framework with the accompanying temptation to focus solely on the elements which fit that particular world view. My contention is that anime is too complex and too interesting a research subject to

easily comply with one approach. However, existing critical frameworks facilitated the study's attempts to position anime within cinematic developments and I outline those which helped to shape the critical examination of the chosen anime texts later in the Chapter. My objective in this study is to complete a detailed examination of selected influential anime works across a range of sub-genres. The evidence collected then enables an assessment to be made of the significance of anime in contemporary discourses on the future of animation.

The work of Paul Wells (1998) in locating animation within a general classification of cinematic tradition is of major significance in any contemporary evaluation of animation. It is worth reviewing Paul Wells' definition of animation, namely,

'To animate, and the related words, animation, animated and animator all derive from the latin verb, *animare*, which means "to give life to," and within the context of the animated film, this largely means the artificial creation of the illusion of movement in inanimate lines and forms. A working definition, therefore, of animation in practice, is that it is a film made by hand, frame-by-frame, providing an illusion of movement which has not been directly recorded in the conventional photographic sense.' (Wells, 1998:10)

Any investigative framework which seeks to interpret anime's characteristics requires a benchmark of conventional or orthodox animation for comparison purposes. As Wells (2000:4) commented, 'Disney's hyper-realist art and the animated film remain the dominant discourse of animation'. The treatment of realism in anime is an interesting area of debate. Whose reality? The director, the Japanese viewer, viewers in other countries? The study critically assesses the treatment of 'reality' in anime using case studies from diverse texts to analyse whether anime follows or deviates from orthodox conventions for animation. Realism is an important concept in the context of anime, particularly in relation to multi-modal forms, as so many anime works refer to the creation of new worlds and the

relation between worlds. There is an interesting symmetry between the movement between worlds and the movement between individual frames of movement in the process of animation. I return to this observation in Chapter 5.

As I noted in Chapter 2, Wells was critical of Disney's hyper-realism. The term 'hyper-realism' was defined by Umberto Eco (1986:53) in a semiotic sense as 'absolute unreality is offered as real presence', that is, an unreal depiction is perceived as 'real'. The use of hyper-reality is therefore essential to convince the viewer that the animation represents an understandable 'reality'. To do this effectively, the animation process is required to follow cinematic conventions in terms of characters and objects following real world rules, for example, gravitational force. The use of sound is also required to be interpreted in a cinematic sense as diegetic and non-diegetic. However assessments of hyper-reality in a cinematic sense require a theoretical basis around which texts may be consistently interpreted.

Deleuze's theories are widely referenced in relation to examinations of animation as a cinematic form. He proposed that hyper-reality is associated with the simulation and simulacra, the simulacrum being 'an image without resemblance' (Deleuze, 1990:257) or an image without a copy. Western theories of post-modernism also deserve consideration, including Baudrillard's (1994) mapping of the changes from the simulation to the simulacra in four stages, particularly in relation to the use of hyper-reality by animation. Technical developments which stimulate a greater degree of hyper-reality improvements can, in turn, not only facilitate the creation of a 'realistic' image but also add to the visual credibility of the 'fantasy' world. This proposal complies with Eco's definition of hyper-realism in animated films. I return to this assessment in Chapter 5 in relation to the films of Hayao

Miyazaki.

In interpreting reality, Wells also referred to Metz's (1990) ideas regarding the relationship between 'movement' as an action and 'reality'. Christian Metz (1990:45) argued that movements are always 'real' and as a consequence cinematic forms are able to reflect reality: "Cinema renders the world of the imagination more real than it had ever been" through inserting "the reality of motion into the unreality of the image". Metz however acknowledged the weaknesses in the argument that cinematic forms mirror reality as, 'the impression of reality produced by the diegesis' or narrative and 'the reality of the vehicle of representation in each art '(Metz, 1990:49). In other words, success is measured in terms of how familiar this particular representation of reality is to the viewer. In relation to animation however, Metz proposed that viewers accepted movement but not as a direct representation of reality. In this context viewers accept inanimate objects such as chairs dancing not because they establish an innate reality but because they simulate movement.

In extending the discourse on animation to its relationship with representations of reality, Wells (1998) provided a useful theoretical framework for orthodox animation within which it is possible to overview the creative processes, the development of content, style and and from a common perspective. The study will adopt this common perspective of representations of reality in assessing anime from other approaches, including the 'radical perspectivalism' of the 'animetic' process' (Lamarre, 2009) and Hiroki Azuma's more deterministic model of otaku anime fans as 'database animals' (Azuma, 2009).

Shen (2007) argued that technology is more than a tool to deliver content. Technological ideas influenced cultural meaning in three ways, namely, through a magical,

scientific and subjective vision. In applying this approach to Japanese anime, it is possible to see how anime creates a perfect representation of 'reality', how it develops a narrative through mythology, and how it also demonstrates hegemony in its imposition of a single production form. However using this argument, the movement of anime into digital forms reinforces the Western conventions of how reality is represented in animated contexts. The need to impose a conventional approach to the mode of production, namely the use of limited animation techniques to maximise the amount produced in the time available, restricts anime's ability to develop new approaches in multi-medial contexts. Thus Shen's hypothesis is interesting in its association between technology and the final creative form, however it ultimately places undue emphasis on a determinist approach which does not provide an explanation for the non-linear production of video games and other interactive media from anime texts.

An additional consideration for the theoretical framework for the study was that of digital visual culture. The change in emphasis in the conceptual basis of digital visual culture from the significance of the narrative to the importance of the image (Darley, 2000) has a particular resonance for anime. This view is reflected in the database animals hypothesis (Azuma, 2009). This hypothesis proposed that otaku fans increasingly used characterisation as the focal point of the creative text rather than narrative. Whereas in orthodox animation, strong characterisation is accompanied by a linear narrative, in anime strong characterisation overwhelms the attempt to develop a linear 'grand' narrative as the narrative is constantly revised by simulacra (represented by numerous 'small narratives'). Otaku fixate on character elements and 'collect' them within the structure of a database. This interpretation of contemporary Japanese pop culture is interesting for the study in

representing a break with orthodox animation (although Azuma included the U.S.A., his context is Japanese). The hypothesis emphasised the importance of merchandise in reinforcing the power of characterisation in a post-modern outlook. This is exemplified by the 'yuru kyara' industry of personalised mascots which advertise and promote a wide range of services, public organisations and companies. Each mascot has an accompanying set of personal traits and characteristics which mimic the elements of anime characters.

There is a link to representations of reality as otaku cling onto a vision of Japan which pre-dates the crisis of identity created by the post-1945 occupation. However for Azuma this is a pseudo-Japan. In the materialism of 1980s Japan, otaku collected and produced media elements which did not necessarily have strong relationships with the narrative. In the post-modernist otaku database structure, the anime image no longer stands for a referent but can exist within the 'database'. The database exists beneath the superficial simulcra of the image in a deeper layer within which, in a modernist interpretation, the narrative would be found. In constructing a cinematic post-modernist landscape, Azuma drew on the work of Baudrillard (1994) and Lacan (1977) in devising his world view of a database structure.

The significance of Azuma's hypothesis for this study is exemplified by his own typology of four generations of otaku fans. The first generation, born in the 1960s, consumed mainly science fiction anime such as 'Uchu Senkan Yamato' *Battleship Yamato* (Matsumoto, 1974). The second generation, born in the 1970s, extended the range of genres consumed. Both these generations accepted the grand narrative tradition and, during the economic success of the 1980s, a sense of national self-confidence began to

replace the post-occupation focus on bleakness and failure. The new narratives were those of Japanese international cultural expansion. The decline of the Japanese economy since the 1980s has produced two new generations. The generation of the 1990s watched 'Shin Seiki Evangerion' *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Anno,1995) and its complex fantasy world. Both that generation and the current generation have broken with the first two generations in ignoring narratives and collecting elements instead. These generations interact with anime mainly via the global Internet with all the blurring of the differences between consumption and production. The lessening of the difference between the 'original' and the 'copy' is an important concept which I explore further in Chapter 4. Azuma asserted that, unlike previous generations, contemporary otaku do not remember the height of Japanese economic power in the 1980s, nor the nostalgia for former grand naratives of Japanese cultural tradition before the American post-war occupation. In 'collecting', their needs as consumers are met without recourse to grand narratives or even small narratives of emotional connections with the text. The implications of this hypothesis for the study are significant. If anime is developing separated from conventional characteristics such as narrative which anchor it to an accepted world view of animation as a cinematic form, its progression into multi-modal versions may be facilitated. How far the otaku-influenced perspective removes anime from orthodox animation forms an important research area for the study.

A third theoretical framework which formed an important basis for the study's methodology was Thomas Lamarre's work on anime as an 'animetic' form, distinct from 'cinematic' counterparts. Lamarre (2009) challenged conventional perspectives on anime as an interesting sub-genre of orthodox animation through his hypothesis of the abstract

'anime machine' (based on Felix Guattari's (1995) 'abstract machine' and the relationship between form and matter.). His approach perceived anime as breaking with the classical characterisation of animation as a form which focuses on the image first and then introduces the connections across images. Anime from Lamarre's perspective is a multi-layered image which releases the energy and movement of the animation through its characters who are often disconnected from the background. The image is not determined by the camera (this statement clearly separated Lamarre from classical apparatus theory) but exists in a separate state prior to its interaction with the camera. A 'distributive field' is produced in anime where 'movement into depth is replaced by density of information' (Lamarre, 2009: 133).

The traditional or closed compositing approach to animation is exemplified by Disney's version of the multiplane camera which enables the differing layers to be moved mechanically in proportion to one another, thereby creating a perception of movement in depth. The 'animetic' approach, in contrast, focuses on movement between surfaces, referred to by Lamarre as the 'animetic interval' (Lamarre, 2009). This approach is demonstrated in the film 'Tenku no Shiro Rhapsody' *Castle in the Sky* (Miyazaki, 1986) where the animation "actualizes a different relation to technology through a different use of the animated moving image" (Lamarre, 2009: 305).

The use of single point Cartesianism in Japanese drawings was associated with the push in the Edo period for modernity and closer association with the West. However Lamarre (2009) contended that this usage did not extend into movement in depth as in the West. Cartesian single point perspective is present at the drawing level but is not associated with movement. Instead the layers slide across the image in a manner which

Lamarre described as 'animetic'. Even when 'cinematism' or movement within the image appears to occur, in anime this effect is achieved through a magnification of the image and rapid editing rather than actual movement from the viewing position. According to Lamarre therefore, the interplay between the animetic process and cinematism within anime reflects a novel approach to animation which distinguished anime from orthodox animation techniques.

The appliance of apparatus theory is particularly relevant to orthodox animation as the camera determines the image and the movement of the image. A determinism which involves not only the speed of movement across the images but also determines the interval between images, the 'animetic' interval. Lamarre implied that the use of the animation stand with a multiplane camera by Japanese animators produced a tendency towards the animetic' process rather cinematism due to the difficulties of demonstrating movement into depth. This contrasted with the adoption of the alternative process of movement across the image, together with the use of multiple layers of cel sheets. Lamarre acknowledged that a tension between the use of cinematism and the animetic process is always present when the multiplane camera is used in the animation process. He identified that pre-1945 Japanese animation adopted this type of cinematism to a lesser degree.

A further defining feature of anime is its use of limited animation where fewer drawings are used. The resulting effect is to flatten the gaps between the layers lessening the perception of depth. Lamarre's proposal is associated with the 'Superflat' perspective which emerged in 1990s Japan, championed by artists such as Takashi Murakami. Murakami led a consumerist art movement which was heavily influenced by manga and

anime art forms. The representation deliberately lacks depth and moves away from classical Cartesian perspectives of a focal point in the drawing. Lamarre (2009) proposed the 'exploded view' of representing anime images where several divergent perspectives are found in a single image in the same way that a diagram shows all the part of a machine without being limited to linear perspective. The exploded view provides multiple frames of reference rather the single point of the Cartesian view. This encourages a feeling of uncertainty and disorientation.

Otsuka (1984) drew a distinction within anime between full and limited animation or 'ugoki-e' (moving image) and 'tome-e' (still image). Miyazaki himself refers to his films as 'eiga' (films) rather than 'anime' (or limited animation). In this context Miyazaki disassociated himself from the influence of Osamu Tezuka's limited animation films. However Hayao Miyazaki has used limited animation for his signature sweeping views across natural environments. Here nature becomes the frame of reference providing a grounding for the scenes. This mixing of techniques has been referred to as limited full animation (Lamarre, 2009). In limited animation anime the voice over becomes particularly important as a means of continuity between potentially still images. The character in general is an important element as the frame of reference for the viewer in merging different views of the character's actions.

This animetic approach to visual movement builds on Deleuze's (1983) definition of visual movement as images of action, perception and affection. Thus the action image may be perceived as the long shot which points to the direction of movement and displays the character's movement. The perception image equates to the medium shot where part of the character is shown suggesting a future action, whereas the affection image is the close

shot, with a complete focus on the face and emotions displayed. How these three modalities interact provides a framework for anime scenes.

In defence to the premise that anime shows 'new ways of thinking about how we inhabit a technologized world' (Lamarre, 2009: 10), Lamarre contrasted anime's multi-layered format with an interpretation of Virilio's (1994) concept of 'dromology' (the science of speed). Lamarre contends that Virilio's critique of technological change adheres to a Cartesian world view that animation is drawn with a sense of movement into form. Lamarre's approach is interesting in that it attempts to analyse anime not only from a cultural or sociological perspective but from the technical specificity of function and value arising from an examination of how anime works and what consequently it brings to a world view. This view is summarised by Lamarre as 'how anime thinks technology' rather than 'how anime thinks Japan' or 'how fans interact with anime' (Lamarre, 2009: xv). For Lamarre, the dichotomy of anime is represented through its content which frequently explores how technology impacts on the human condition, and its articulation through multi-modal outputs which rely on technology to reach increasing audiences. Lamarre's approach formed an important part of the research framework for this study, particularly for assessing the similarities and the differences between anime and orthodox animation from the perspective of production values. However where Lamarre minimises the influence of cultural factors, my premise extends his non-determinist approach to techniques with a balanced view of the significance of Japanese cultural tradition and the influence of individual directors in the development of anime.

The review of the literature highlighted the potential dichotomy of the 'Western' view and the 'Asian' view. It has already been demonstrated that this is no simple duality. The

premise of the study is that anime is a novel approach to animation from both perspectives, although with an emphasis on different empirical elements in each perspective. John Reeve attempted to summarise the Japanese cultural perspective as follows,

“Serenity and turbulence, spirituality and slaughter, have often gone hand in hand in Japanese culture Japanese art, like Japanese religion, can provide an assurance (or illusion) of calm while also honestly reflecting the turbulence of life both without and within” (Reeve,2005: 22)

Yet anime also makes an extensive use of literary texts from other cultural traditions as a source of creative ideas. The interesting question for this study is whether this borrowing can be interpreted as intertextuality, that is a reading of the literary codes contained in the text from a common perspective between author and reader/ spectator (Kristeva, 1980). Or, whether those codes require a detailed understanding of the culture to be thus interpreted which requires the spectator to therefore initially understand those codes. Barthes (1977) proposed that the time of the author was over to be replaced by the time of the reader. Lamarre identified a double consequence of the interaction between Western and Asian perspectives, thus,

'a well established pattern of complicity between Western Orientalism and Japanese auto-orientalism. The Western Orientalist gaze thus becomes a source of self-identity for the non-Western position, which is made subject in its relation to that gaze' (Lamarre, 1998: 179)

Therefore does Miyazaki's use of Western literary texts represent intertextuality in the empirical sense? I propose that his borrowing of external motifs and themes are re-purposed in a specifically Japanese reading of the texts. As a result, his anime texts represent a novel product rather than an intertextual interpretation of the original. A question posed by this study is, whether Miyazaki's motivation is a personal one, or is it to

facilitate the reading of the text by Japanese spectators?

An alternative perspective on intertextuality provided by Hutcheon (1989) is relevant in the context of my premise that where anime borrows texts from other cultural traditions, these texts are subverted in a specifically Japanese way. Hutcheon asserted that parody represented a critical post-modernist textual analysis which, in its ironic representation, subverts the original text. Can Miyazaki's use of external texts therefore be viewed as an attempt to parody the Western original? This issue is further explored in Chapter 5.

Intertextuality clearly has implications for any discussion of authorship. An innate characteristic of anime is its association with individual 'creators' or, in the case of printed manga, 'authors'. This follows directly Astruc's (1948) concept of the director acting as a 'camera stylo' or 'writing' creatively in a visual form. Considering the reliance of anime on printed manga, it was not surprising that notable manga authors such as Tezuka, Miyazaki, Oshii and Anno became successful anime directors. The vertical integration of production in Japanese anime studios such as Studio Ghibli (to produce films by Miyazaki) and Madhouse (which produced Satoshi Kon's films) is well suited to support individual directors despite the industrial nature of the animation process.

The auteur film tradition in Hollywood and European film traditions is generally associated with arthouse cinema following the popularity of auteur theory in the 1950s and 1960s. Francois Truffaut's influential article in 1954 which placed contemporary films in the French New Wave movement at the centre of the discourse on auteur theory was followed by Sarris's (1968) study of Hollywood cinema. In the context of animation, the large scale industrial process required to produce a feature film would tend to mitigate against the emergence of auteur film directors. Most animation requires the production of hundreds of

thousands of individual drawings. Even in digital environments, the production team numbers many hundreds. Yet anime films generally are associated with one creative voice and are certainly promoted as such.

This is interesting and relevant to animation as a genre. However in the context of this study, there are also specific questions concerning the relationship between the director and the production manager as the creative source of the necessary spacing between frames, that is, who coordinates the framing?. In addition, who is responsible for the industrial process of creating thousands of frames for the finished film? How is it possible for a director to be an 'auteur' when the creative process is overseen by such a large creative group?

These research assumptions require quantitative evidence in addition to qualitative theoretical textural analysis, particularly in relation to modes of production and socio-economic factors. The annual national statistical reference work, *The Japanese Statistical Year Book*, was used as the main source of statistical data relating to anime production and consumption. Annotated information is provided on core economic data relating to population demographics, industrial sectors and commerce. This information was supplemented by key national statistics provided online by the National Library of Japan, the Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and the Tokyo Research Institute of Economy, Trade and Industry (RIETI).

3.3 Research areas

Achieving a balance between an investigation of technological factors and contemporary aesthetical and cultural factors in Japan was at the heart of constructing the methodology for the study. The issues identified by the literature review and the discussion

of relevant theoretical frameworks provide three potential research areas. Firstly, the emergence of a film form with 'animetic' characteristics as outlined by Lamarre (2009). Secondly the significance of the influence of Japanese aesthetics and culture on the development of anime as a different animation form, using a broad range of theoretical approaches including Azuma (2009), and thirdly, the impact of the director as a creative force on the development of anime, with empirical and critical evidence identified from the selected texts. This is not a determinist view and the research sought to understand both anime's influence on animation as a cinematic form and the corresponding influences on anime as it develops multi-modal forms.

There is a creative tension between studies which focused on the influence of otaku as co-creators and consumers of anime and those which feature the cult of the star director with total control of the creative process and distribution of the anime. In analysing the role of otaku, there are echoes of Hall's (1980) reception theory placing the spectator in a central role in determining the meaning of anime texts. In relation to the dominance of the director, Wells (2002) referred to the 'meta author' or the director as a 'brand', for example Walt Disney who was marketed as a semiotic signifier for the particular style of the studio. The association of Studio Ghibli with Hayao Miyazaki has similar overtones. This tension is a challenge for any research framework for the significance of anime in contemporary cinema.

The review of the literature and a critical assessment of the theoretical framework context identified the complexities associated with any holistic overview of anime as a film form. The choice of a suitable methodology for this study therefore acknowledges the importance of considering more than one perspective. In summary, from the review of

theoretical frameworks, three areas emerged which form the basis for addressing the research aims of the study, namely:-

- Does Japanese anime, through its 'animetic' characteristics (Lamarre, 2009), represent an evolutionary step for animation as it develops trans-medial digital modes of production?
- How far do Japanese culture, language and aesthetic traditions characterise anime as a novel approach to animation?
- Is it possible to explain a consistency in the significance of the role of the director across diverse anime texts using auteurist theories?

3.4 The choice of methodology

Roland Barthes (1985) commented on a visit to Japan in 1966 where he noticed a lack of complexity in interpreting Japanese culture signifiers in everyday life compared to his experience with Western societies. As Barthes himself later admitted, his initial description of Japanese customs was not written from an informed perspective. I refer to Barthes' book as an example of the complexity which faces the researcher from a different culture when studying and analysing the medium. My visit to Kyoto Seika University and the Manga Museum in 2011 was particularly valuable in assessing the availability of relevant Japanese sources for this study. This was accompanied by visits to Japanese anime attractions, including the Studio Ghibli Museum in Tokyo. The choice of methodology benefited significantly from these opportunities to balance Western sources with Japanese contextual evidence. In the following section I consider the merits of

different approaches for conducting the research and interpreting the evidence found.

3.5 Content analysis

Roberts (1997:11) proposed at least six definitions of content analysis by different authors from Krippendorf (1980) who concentrated solely on the text to Osgood (1971) who analysed everything which 'communicated' within the text. In considering content analysis as a methodology which records, collects, and interprets chosen items, I aimed to utilise the strengths of content analysis to both identify and compare the characteristics of anime's complex typologies of sub-genres as well as its multi-modal digital versions. In addition, content analysis enables a more detailed categorisation to be completed of the commonalities and differences between anime's differing forms in terms of how the image and narratives are constructed. One of the advantages of content analysis as a methodology is the facilitation of a consistent assessment of meaning through the creation of a structure which is representative of the text – a valuable outcome in terms of the complexity of anime.

The usefulness of content analysis is not only limited to textual comparison. It may also be relevant in reviewing relationships between the industrial process, the treatment of the subject and the attitudes of audiences (Allen,1992). However, the value of content analysis is dependent on the choice of questions and the methods adopted to interpret and analyse the available data. Therefore, it is important to continue to ask the question how should the text be interpreted?

The methodology required a consistent approach towards the selection of texts in order to satisfy the requirement to represent the three research areas. Different texts

include differing modality. The multi-modal forms represented in anime adds to the complexity in the choice of an appropriate methodology. The influence of the public discourse as demonstrated by electronic iteration may lead to a dominant discourse emerging, a process which Barthes (1972) described as 'exnomination', where perceptions of meaning remain unattributed. Hills (2002) specifically acknowledged the role of anime web-based fandoms as a new discourse on anime films. Evidence has emerged that anime fans' attitudes towards texts may be influenced by a common understanding of what is generally 'acceptable' when commenting about individual films (McKee, 2003). This leaves an interesting question, does the text influence audience perception and attitudes or does the content of a text reflect attitudes which are already present?

There are advantages in adopting a scientific approach in comparing textual collections to authenticate the research (Neuendorf, 2002). For example, the opportunities to assess attitudes towards anime by differing demographics of age, gender and socio-economic background. Such measurable analyses are valuable in terms of film studies however they are restrictive in terms of identifying factors which are appropriate for this type of analysis, particularly in relation to issues of creativity (Kuhn,1970).

Krippendorf (1980) identified six factors which require consideration in preparing a methodology for content analysis, namely, the identification of relevant data, the characteristics of the data, the extraction of the data, the context for the analysis of the selected data, any restrictions related to the way that the data will be analysed and the proposed focus for the analysis outputs. This approach has obvious benefits for the type of research study proposed in helping to establish a clear framework for data management.

Clearly structured content analyses which identify measurable qualitative data help

to reduce uncertainty. A methodology which assists the process of investigating hypotheses and delineating differences between texts provides clarity, particularly in relation to using criteria across different film texts. On the other hand, post-structuralist viewpoints emphasise the importance of studying texts in order to gain a better understanding of how individuals make sense of their world. From this world view, the weakness of the structured approach is that it attempts to derive common structures across all creative output. McKee observed a tendency that 'people from different cultures experience reality differently' (McKee, 2003:9). His suggestion for approaching textual analysis is that of 'cultural relativism' where reality which is interpreted differently may be treated with equal significance. This approach, theoretically, would acknowledge the issues which arise when anime is created in differing trans-medial forms.

A structuralist approach provides a specific focus to interpret meaning within texts and between texts. From an aesthetic perspective, texts may be compared to identify those which best conform with specific genre characteristics of particular film traditions. Through utilising factors such as 'originality', 'complexity', and coherence' (Bordwell & Thompson, 2003; 53), it is possible to make a judgement on aesthetic values. The advantage of this procedure is the adoption of clear criteria with which to compare texts. However, each text represents a unique representation of meaning dependent on the creative instincts of the director. Therefore there is no certainty that texts will conform to a pre-ordained order. As a consequence, however objective the criteria, it is possible that an element of subjectivity will be associated with the choice of texts, and how these texts are interpreted and analysed.

I also considered alternative structuralist approaches such as Marxism which

utilises economic materialism as the means of interpreting film texts. Contrasting psychological explanations which focus on the formation of the psyche in early life in interpreting cultural texts were also reviewed. These viewpoints provided opportunities to construct a methodology for the study, however I considered that the research areas were better suited to a more agile methodology which specifically focused on cultural interpretation.

Anime is a unique Japanese cultural form which has been exported in several trans-modal forms. As a consequence, the study required a methodology which was agile in identifying and analysing information in diverse cultural contexts. It is possible to criticise content analysis as collecting data which is potentially confusing, for example, occasions where creative 'meaning' is not perceived or acknowledged by differing audiences. The frequency of occurrence may not necessarily be a reliable assessment of the significance of the item to the analysis of 'meaning' in studying the text, nor will the audience response necessarily be a reliable assessment of the creative objective of the author (Dyer, 1982).

In conclusion, in developing the methodology for the study, content analysis has advantages and disadvantages from both a structuralist and post-structuralist viewpoint. Within the context of the study's research area, I concluded that content analysis was a useful means of capturing the cultural factors which potentially determine the development of anime as a new animation form. In the next section, I examine the potential role of genre theory in developing the study's methodology.

3.6 Genre theory

Genre theory, as part of a content methodology which categorises and analyses film texts, provides a particular strength for attempts to link the expectations of the creator with those of audiences. An analysis using genre enables the text to be examined within social contexts. As a result, the importance of social and cultural attitudes in the production and consumption of films may be assessed (Thwaites et al, 1994). This approach addresses one of the potential weaknesses of content analysis, namely the tendency to focus only on the text without necessarily taking into account social and cultural contexts.

However, genres do not form objective categories – any process to categorise items involves a subjective assessment. As Bordwell noted,

'one could... argue that no set of necessary and sufficient conditions can mark off genres from other sorts of groupings in ways that all experts or ordinary film-goers would find acceptable' (Bordwell, 1989: 147)

Stam (2000) identified four challenges in attempting to categorise films by genre. Initially, the issue of extending or restricting a category. Secondly, 'normativism', or the situation where membership of the genre is generally accepted by creators and consumers. Thirdly, monolithic definitions where the text can be categorised within a single genre. Finally, a definition referred to as 'biologism', where genres evolve and change. These factors were worthy of further consideration in planning the methodology for the study.

It was also necessary to acknowledge that films may be categorised within more than one genre. The situation may also arise where the influence of other genres is seen in the individual film text. The concept of 'intertextuality', where one text influences another

is also a particular characteristic of film categorisation by genre. In the context of anime as a filmic form, it is characterised by many sub-genres (Barthes,1975). However derivations from other texts introduce issues of audience perception. Does the Japanese spectator view these examples of intertextual films through an inherently 'Japanese' understanding of genre boundaries or through a more global understanding of genre through Western film tradition?

Gledhill (2012) emphasised the significance of cultural factors in addressing the opaqueness of genre boundaries where there are no discrete elements which definitively establish the differences between genres, issues which also concerned Neale (1999) in relation to the treatment of 'difference' within genres. This is a particularly interesting area of research for anime with its many typologies of sub-genres. Altman's (1999) identification of semantic/syntactic elements which are associated with specific genres was also helpful in assessing the usefulness of genre theory for the aesthetic factors in anime.

In relation to the significance of such factors, genre theory is therefore a mechanism for the process of analysing texts within their social and cultural contexts. This context also highlights the significance of the industrial context within which animation is produced. In the specific instance of anime, genre analysis supports attempts to make sense of anime's complexity and rich content. Genre analysis also provides an opportunity for the research to collect and analyse relevant data, for example, by theme (social, cultural, gender), narrative,(story and structure), iconography (motifs), technical (mise-en-scène, lighting, cameras, music) characterisation,place (historical, geographical) and audiences. On the same basis, genre analysis will potentially be unhelpful in the research areas concerned with the broader impact of anime. For example, this approach is likely to require

augmentation in relation to new anime media forms such as interactive digital games where narrative and plot have different characteristics. McKee (1993) adopted genre analysis in identifying characteristics which provide potential boundaries for data collection in cultural studies. He summarised the issues as follows,

- issues which relate to common perceptions of the specific genre and its features;
- the significance of the film in indigenous film tradition, including the film's construction as a creative work;
- the extent of semiotic symbols as a mechanism to establish meaning;
- issues of intertextuality and the text's relationships with other works
- significant textual features such as narrative;
- film style, iconography and the use of techniques to create meaning (camera work, editing, lighting, colour, music, mise-en-scène, special effects);
- socio-cultural relationships which denote the text as being from a specific country, culture or part of society;
- issues relating to audience engagement with the story and characters and how the film addresses its target audience;
- institutional issues (work flow and processes in studio systems).

This comprehensive nature of this approach was well suited to the research areas identified for the study.

3.7 Semiotic analysis

The visual impact of anime relies partially on the inclusion of symbols within texts. Semiotic analysis, is an attractive form of analysis for animation because of its emphasis

on visual form and how form provides meaning (Peirce,1934). The use of semiotic analysis addresses some of the concerns relating to content analysis. As with genre theory, semiotics is an holistic approach which examines the whole text not individual elements by themselves. Unlike content analysis, the frequency of an item does not necessarily mean that it is significant. Significance is defined as the importance that viewers give to the signs in the text and how the signs relate to one another.

Semiotics is concerned with modality judgements, that is, how the text relates to the real world or the expectations of the genre. This approach has advantages in relation to anime as an animation medium which attempts to create its own realities as well as blurring the line between the real world and the world of anime. The invention of recent anime avatars such as Hatsune Miku as a pop singer in Japan and star of the Toyota American advertisement campaign provides interesting contexts for semiotic analysis (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Toyota advertisement with Hatsune Miku

Similarly, the recent admission that Aimi Eguchi, a member of the girl band AKB48, is not a research student from Tokyo but is instead a hologram of the features of all the other members, provides a fascinating context for exploring meaning and reality in anime (see

Figure 2).



Figure 2: Hologram of Aimi Eguchi

The use of genre theory to identify the boundaries for the study together with the additional use of semiotic analysis to extend the analysis of texts by content provided the scope for the methodology. The influence of the medium was also potentially a significant factor in the analysis process. McLuhan's (1964) famous comment, 'the medium is the message' is still relevant in the context of the new forms of digital film, particularly in relation to transmedia.

3.8 The significance of trans-medial developments

In addition to being a central element of Japanese popular culture, anime has also spread out from its indigenous roots to achieve global reach and appeal. Once translated, anime has demonstrated an ability to connect people from different cultures and languages, forming new online communities. Potentially, this cultural complexity creates challenges for an empirical content-based methodology. Would a combination of genre theory and semiotic analysis address transmedia development?

Jenkins (2006) described transmedia storytelling as storytelling across multiple forms of media with each element making distinctive contributions to a fan's understanding of the story world. By using different media formats, transmedia create "entrypoints" through which consumers can become immersed in a story world. The aim of this immersion is authorship which is shared (Dinehart, 2006). Gomez (2007: 42) defined transmedia as "the art of conveying messages themes or storylines to mass audiences through the artful and well planned use of multiple media platforms".

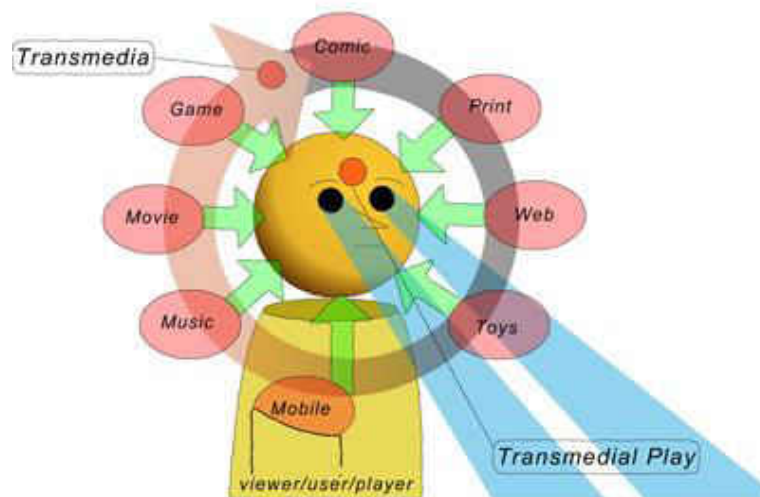


Figure 3: The transmedia paradigm after Dinehart (2006)

3.9 The influence of glocalisation

The chosen methodology also needed to address the cultural phenomenon of glocalisation or adapting creative works to suit a local audience (Iwabuchi, 1998). As anime studios sought new markets and provided films to differing countries, the original was edited to appeal to local audience expectations (Katan, 2004). The glocalisation of anime is also relevant to the research area associated with translation and sub-titling, and its

subsequent connection to cultural power and cultural identity. Translation does not simply involve replacing one language with another (Venuti, 1995). Cross-cultural communication of a text also often involves adapting or translating cultural and national identity resulting in differing interpretation (Condry, 2013).

3.10 Data collection

Thus the data collection process was characterised as a composite one which acknowledged the influence of theoretical approaches on the boundaries of the research area and the way in which significance was measured, for example, the usefulness of genre theory combined with a semiotic analysis to address cross-cultural issues, The choice of self assessment criteria for the selection of texts, data collection and analysis followed a logical progression to identify suitable films for the study, namely, were the criteria for the choice of text clear in terms of the objectives of the study (i.e. what were the main reasons for selecting the text)?

In addition, any influences which could affect my subsequent analysis of the film were identified. In terms of genre, the criteria included which genre/sub genre was the most appropriate for categorising the film; which subject and themes did the film relate to; how typical was the film in terms of the selected genre, and did it meet the expectations and conventions of the genre. Beyond a consideration of whether the individual text extended the conventions for the genre and in what way, I reviewed the ways in which the text reflected other genres and, in particular, how it related to and reflected reality (or differing realities). Cross-culturally, the data collection process attempted to assess whether the text reflected ideological assumptions and values, and which assumptions

were made regarding its target audiences (in terms of age, gender or ethnicity). Finally, the data collection process encompassed the need to identify intertextual references and how similar and different were the links to other texts.

The modes of analysis for the film texts therefore acknowledged several theoretical approaches in conducting the study and examining the research questions. The choice of individual texts employed criteria identified from the selected theoretical frameworks. Sampling criteria to identify individual texts for study considered the following factors, the type of technical techniques (selective or full animation); narrative structures; characterisation; content; evidence of intertextuality and social norms; and evidence of individuality (in the auteur sense) in the approach. In addition, films which had been released beyond Japan were selected as being capable of critical study in broader socio-cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The potential for the choice of texts to be unrepresentative and to negatively affect the study conclusions was considered before making a final choice on the works of Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi Kon and Mamoru Oshii as fulfilling the required criteria. Each director had created very individualistic texts within the context of the Japanese animation studio system structure, yet had chosen very different content areas for their creative interests. Their output has influenced other directors and demonstrates influences which it could be argued are non-Japanese. Hideaki Anno (1960 -) also represents an innovative anime director whose characteristic style emphasises the emotions and thoughts of his characters. The television series, 'Shin Seiki Evangerion' *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995-1996) had an increasingly darker tone which reflected a personal disenchantment with the development of anime. Although Anno is an important anime director, I did not include his

work in this study as, in general, Anno has directed television series and live action films rather than individual anime feature films. In order to retain an integral cohesion in terms of the chosen methodology, I decided to return to Anno in a potential future study of anime series.

The chosen directors' films also provide interesting insights potentially leading to a broader understanding of the innovative nature of anime. These three directors have significantly influenced the development of their respective studios, Studio Ghibli, Madhouse and Production I.G. All have international reputations and, as such, they are also central to the socio-cultural and socio-economic debate relating to anime's significance. Hayao Miyazaki is a prolific feature film director with twenty seven films produced since 1984. Satoshi Kon directed nineteen films and anime series between 1993 and his untimely death in 2010 at the age of forty six. Mamoru Oshii has directed thirty four films and television series since 1977.

Miyazaki is well known beyond Japan for his success at film awards including an Oscar for his anime film, 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' *Spirited Away* (2001). Interestingly Miyazaki, in the two large collections of his writings *Shuppatsu Ten 1979-1996* and *Onkaeshi Ten 1997-2008* refers to his films as *eiga* (films) distinguishing them from conventional anime. Satoshi Kon was best known for the thriller 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue* (1997) which explored issues of feminine sexuality in Japanese society. Mamoru Oshii is an interesting director for the way in which anime techniques were not only used for animated output but also for live action cinematic films such as 'Abalon' *Avalon* (Oshii, 2001)

3.11 The importance of auteur theories

A characteristic of anime is the prominence of the role of film directors and the attribution of the development of anime sub-genres to the influence of individuals. As Robin Wood (1965) initially noted, auteur theory provides a means of examining the extent of creative influence exerted by film directors. Orthodox animation is characterised by the prominence of the film studio, notably Disney. From the perspective of economic production and organisational structures, Japanese film tradition adopted the Hollywood animation model. However I propose that specific Japanese aesthetic cultural factors have impacted on the role given to the film director in anime. As a consequence, auteur theory has a relevance for this study in attempting to analyse the significance of anime as a novel approach to animation.

The framework of classical auteur theory as developed by Sarris (1962) identified three circles of understanding with the inner circle only achieved by few film directors. As a methodology, Sarris' theory does not demonstrate clear criteria by which a director is defined as achieving 'auteur' status. Although the emphasis on style, aesthetics and form is interesting in relation to an examination of animation (Grant, 2008). The origins of the director as 'author' predate the debates within the French journal 'Cahiers du Cinema' in the 1950s and the American 'Film Culture' in the 1960s. The intervention of the film director formed an important characteristic of the German Expressionist movement in the 1920s. However the initial discourse identified *mise-en-scène* and narrative style as empirical characteristics which signified classic auteur theory with its emphasis on the canon of individual directors (Truffaut, 1954). The interest in structuralism in the 1970s led to an emphasis on identifying auteurs by their textual features, in some respects reducing

the role of the director to that of a replicator of current ideology (Caughie, 2007).

The concept of delimiting the director as a 'brand' as opposed to his/her creative output (Woollen, 1972) is an interesting approach for this study, particularly in relation to the work of Hayao Miyazaki. As is the importance of the spectator in the determination of 'meaning' when analysing individual texts (Hall, 1980: Caughie, 2007). Cultural studies of audience reception and film director criticism have both nuanced the study of auteur theory as a revisionist view of the significance of the influence of the director. In the context of Japanese otaku, audience reception studies provides a useful starting point to examine the creative relationship between director and anime fan.

In attempting to further define how meaning is transmitted from director to spectator through the film text, Hall (1973) began with elemental communication theory. He characterised the director as the encoder of the film's 'message' and the spectator as the receiver with the 'noise' of societal attitudes and mores distorting the consumption of the creative text. Content analysis therefore becomes crucial for the audience in receiving the intended 'message' as it must be possible for the director's views to be clearly understood for the spectator to fully appreciate the original creative thought. However even then, the spectator may ask questions of the text which the director did not intend to answer.

Postmodernist thought developed this break with the 'grand narrative'. Hiroki Azuma's (2009) theory of the otaku as 'database animals' adds a dimension to the post-modernist discourse on the relationship between the director and the spectator. Linked with classical genre theory, this interpretation is particularly useful in assessing the role of otaku anime fans as co-creators as well as consumers of anime. Hutcheon's (2002) discussion of the subversion of post-modernist thought in relation to how information is

adapted or re-purposed is also interesting in relation to my hypothesis that Japanese anime subverts non-Japanese elements which are introduced by the director.

3.12 Background to the interpretation process

The interpretation of the evidence from the selected texts draws on the classical theories of content analysis, genre and authorship outlined as providing a robust approach for determining meaning and representation, and thereby facilitating the research process to determine whether Japanese anime is a significantly novel form of animation. Revisionist post-modernist interpretations had a particular role to play in further determining whether the selected texts presented a world view based on specific Japanese aesthetics and iconography, even when distributed globally in digital environments.

The process of analysing the selected texts is considered from two perspectives, Initially, what evidence is obtained which demonstrated that anime does or does not conform to expected norms of orthodox animation and, following on from this, which critical factors provide a consistent explanation for anime's performance against the expected norms.

The research field is challenging one, not least because the creation and distribution of anime is increasingly within new digital contexts. There are also inherent tensions between the elements of creation which demand an economic determinism where mass production dictates the organisational structures of animation, and the notable individualism of anime directors such as Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi Kon and Momoru Oshii in completing handmade drawings as part of the animation process. The dichotomy of a

collaborative industrial process and a creative individualism combining to result in a completed film is one of the elements which stimulates debate about anime.

This complexity is not limited to creative elements. Anime is also characterised by a wide range of sub-genres, each with its own individual factors and iconography. This context provides a challenging environment for the researcher attempting to extrapolate an assessment of significance across the creative form. Anime addresses contemporary social issues alongside fantasy worlds. The juxtaposition of 'virtual' and 'reality' reflects a Japanese world view where animate and inanimate, real and spiritual co-exist side by side not divided as in Western culture. Within texts, the dominant position of characterisation in orthodox animation is challenged by more sophisticated narratives. The interpretation of evidence collected from selected texts therefore required an analytic process which delivers a consistent output from complex data.

3.13 The analytic process

In order to address the complexity of the texts, I adopted three empirical factors for the analysis framework. Firstly, the significance of visual iconography linked to traditional Japanese aesthetics present in *mise-en-scène* and the animation dynamic referred to by Lamarre (2009) as the 'animetic' tradition which distinguishes anime from conventional animation. The presence of this factor in the anime texts provided opportunities to assess the evidence for the distinctiveness of anime as a filmic product which is elementally Japanese. In the context of the global distribution of anime, the treatment of non-Japanese influences by the selected texts provided opportunities to assess whether anime retains its distinctiveness, particularly in relation to trans-medial digital forms. A post-modernist

approach acknowledged the requirements to analyse form and style across digital media.

The second critical factor for the analysis framework was the treatment of cultural identity, particularly in relation to the perception of anime within and beyond Japan. Hiroki Azuma's post-modernist views regarding co-creation and the importance of otaku provided an impetus to incorporate audience reaction in addition to critical review. As already outlined, recent academic research in South East Asia is categorised by a concern that an existing hegemony of Western cultural thought imposed on Asian film criticism has resulted in a lessening of the significance of cultural identity in anime texts. For example, the need for an analytic framework based on the influences of Japanese 'social' tenets rather than Western emphasis on individual needs and perspectives.

The third factor for the analytic framework was the significance of the director as the dominant influence on the text as opposed to orthodox animation's emphasis on the studio house style and the conventional expectations for animation as a limited film form. The prominence of the anime film director associates anime with 'high' culture in the Western film tradition and many anime feature films are shown in arthouse cinemas outside Japan (unlike Western orthodox animation films produced as 'blockbusters' for family audiences). Yet within Japan, anime feature films have a dominance which is both popular and worthy of critical review. The idea of the manga author and the anime film director 'as author' has a distinctive status which differentiates their films from the perception of orthodox animations as studio productions. Thus the feature anime films of Hayao Miyazaki, Katsuhiro Otomo, Satoshi Kon, Mamoru Oshii, Isao Takahata and others comply with a definition of a textual author (responsible for the technical process and the production process) as well as that of an extra-textual author (responsible for marketing and

promoting the film). This individual creative input is worthy of specific analysis in interpreting the evidence from the selected anime texts.

3.14 Summary

This Chapter discussed the hypothesis for the study that anime represents a novel form of animation beyond a position as a sub-genre of orthodox animation and the identification of a suitable methodology to test this hypothesis. An examination of content analysis, genre theory and semiotic theory is critiqued in the context of the impact of trans-medial digital developments, glocalisation and the importance of auteur theories. The criteria for the selection of anime directors and their respective texts is outlined in the context of the aims of the study. Three critical factors are identified for the interpretation of the evidence from detailed textual analysis of selected anime texts and for the analytic framework. These were the significance of Japanese iconography, mise-en-scène and the animation dynamic (the 'animetic' effect). Other factors included the significance of cultural identity on the development of anime within and beyond Japan and the usefulness of post-modernist views in explaining anime's 'difference' from the expectations from orthodox animation. Finally the importance of creative input by individual film directors to the final output and their relationship with anime audiences. The next Chapter provides an overview of the development of anime within a cultural and historical context.

Chapter 4: The Development of Japanese Anime

'If you aren't remembered, you never existed'. (Arisu, 'Shiriaru Ekusuperimentsu Rein', Nagamura, 1998)

Japanese anime is defined by its form, its iconography, thematic sub-genres and its cultural and social context. This Chapter examines the historical development of anime from the beginning of the twentieth century to the first decade of the twenty first century. Unlike animation in the United States and Europe, anime is the most popular cinematic form in Japan as its related printed form, manga, is the most popular literary form. The popularity of anime derived from a long tradition of visual aesthetics which, allied with a diverse stylistic iconography, attracts audiences of all ages.

Anime studios in Japan reproduced many of the physical modes of production from the production process developed by Hollywood. In 1914, Earl Hurd and John Bray took out an American patent for cel animation. The technique drew images on a clear transparent celluloid (cel) sheet with the background added later. As Crafton (1993) makes clear, animation as a process accompanied all cinematic traditions, particularly in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. However Hurd and Bray were able to use the strength of their patents to consolidate their position. By 1916, the techniques for cel animation had been standardised and the equally important production processes established. Each drawing was transferred onto cels. Colour was later added to the reverse of the cel, with the layers of individual cels built up and photographed by a rostrum camera to simulate movement on the screen with an accompanying background plate. In 1915, Max and Dave Fleischer invented the rotoscoping process which facilitated the re-use of drawings over differing backgrounds and improved the visual presentation. In the 1920s and 1930s, Roy

and Walt Disney pioneered many of the organisational processes which characterise modern cel animation including the use of sound on film and colour animations. Disney's contribution to the development of cel animation included the multiplane camera which facilitated the ability of animated images to create movement into depth by taking 3-D images of cels.

The introduction of digital facilities expanded the ability of animation to use hyper-reality as a visual technique. In 1964 Bell Laboratories developed the first computer animations. In 1973, the feature film, '*Futureworld*' (Heffron, 1976) included the first Computer Generated Image (CGI), a hand and face modelled by Edwin Catmull. Catmull, together with John Lasseter, founded Pixar Animation Studios in 1979. Pixar has developed many highly successful CGI animated films, including the '*Toy Story*' franchise (1995-2010). Wu (2012) observed that Pixar's hyper-realist CGI style was a significant breakthrough for animation as a form. Modern developments include the use of hand drawn and computer generated images (transdigital, often 2-D animation), the combination of live action and cel animation (for example, '*Who Framed Roger Rabbit*' Zemeckis, 1988) full 3-D CGI animations and stop motion techniques to mimic real life movement using objects as well as drawn images. The announcement that the 36th '*Doraemon*' anime film, directed by Takashi Yamazaki, to be realised in the summer of 2014 will be a 3-D, CGI production rather than hand drawn as previously indicates the direction of travel.

The content of cel animation films has retained many early characteristics including strong characterisations, familiar themes and tropes. The emergence of distinct characters was an early development with '*Felix the Cat*' (Sullivan/Messmer, 1923) successful in attracting audiences. In 1927 Roy and Walt Disney received financial backing to produce a

sound cartoon, '*Steam Boat Willie*' starring Mickey Mouse which was an instant success with audiences.

The subsequent development of new technical processes, including three strip Technicolor in the 1930s, enhanced the appeal of cartoons. Disney moved animation beyond a technical process to the marketing of an entertainment experience. Strong characterisation, linear stories, comic effects and merchandising were pioneered by Disney. In 1937, '*Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*' became the first full length colour animation film. The company's later expansion into theme parks consolidated this approach. In addition to anthropomorphic animal characters such as Donald Duck, intertextual versions of fairy stories and children's classics proved to be very popular post 1945. Anime benefited from these technical developments in Hollywood during the 20th century. However from the start, visually, anime subverted the techniques for its own purposes.

A good example of this subversion is the experimental anime, '*Jumping*' directed by Osamu Tezuka in 1984. Tezuka used the technique of 'condensation', the use of elliptical cuts to change the perception of time passing, essentially speeding up the process and exaggerating the association between the action and its result. The anime begins with a child jumping down a rural street. Each jump is associated with a new shot which moves the location. The director drew the anime from the child's point of view perspective which also functioned as the plot. Each shot shows the child moving to new locations, cities, a battlefield, the ocean, jumping higher each time. The effect is to rush the viewer through time and space in a restricted 'real' time of six minutes. The anime also demonstrates Lamarre's multi-perspectivalism hypothesis of anime production (note the drawing of the

bird in Figure 4). The next section examines the influences on anime as it developed as a distinct cinematic tradition in Japan.



Figure 4: Shots in sequence from the experimental anime 'Jumping' (Tezuka,1984)

4.1 The influence of 'nihonjinron'

In assessing the influence of cultural context on the development of Japanese anime, the concept of 'nihonjinron', or what makes an aspect uniquely Japanese, is an important factor. This discourse has fascinated Japanese writers and philosophers from the Heian period (794-1185). Initially a discussion of the differences between Japan and its dominant neighbour China, over the centuries, this has become an important debate on Japanese cultural identity. The opening up of Japan to Western trade after 1868, resulted in a Western fascination with all things Japanese, 'Japonisme', which introduced Japanese ceramics and art to Europe and the United States. French artists and designers in the Art Nouveau and Cubism movements adopted traditional characteristics of Japanese images such as no perspective, little shadow, flat planes and asymmetrical design.

This development was not a one way process. Within Japan, a drive to catch up with the benefits of the Western Industrial Revolution was demonstrated by the increase in

Japanese trade missions to Europe and the United States in the late nineteenth century. Somewhat ironically described as 'wakon yosai' or a mixture of Japanese spirit and Western techniques, the early animation industry in Japan at the beginning of the twentieth century enthusiastically embraced new technology developed in the West.

Following defeat and occupation by the American army in 1945, 'nihonjinron' developed a new dynamic. Dale (1986) identified a movement from an initial repudiation of traditional Japanese forms in 1945 to a second phase in the 1960s, where Westernised forms were criticised as being not entirely fit for Japanese purposes. The early emphasis of American propaganda on the non-democratic feudal system in Japan and the cult of the Emperor stigmatised the Japanese as an arrogant and inflexible people. One unforeseen consequence for the occupiers was a post-war nostalgic popular interest in 'jidaigeki' films, traditional period dramas, of which Akira Kurosawa's masterpiece 'Rashomon' (1950) is an iconic example. The sub-genre of 'chanbara' which romanticised 'bushido', the code of honour of the Samurai or warrior lords, was equally popular. Kurosawa's film 'Shichinin no Samurai' (1954) explored the classic dilemma for the Samurai of 'ninjo' or behaving honourably and 'giro', loyalty to his lord. It may not be surprising that Kurosawa found inspiration in one of Shakespeare's darkest plays, 'Macbeth', for his Samurai film, 'Kumanosu' (1957).

This popular cultural rebellion continued in the 1960s and led to a third phase in the 1970s of a positive view of traditional Japanese viewpoints and cultural forms. An emphasis on a uniquely Japanese cultural representation corresponded with a period of rapid economic growth in the 1980s where advanced technology coupled with efficient industrial organisation formed the basis for renewed national confidence. It was during the

1980s that anime also achieved peak growth with an increasing ability to distribute content across films, videos, television and gaming.

The more negative perceptions associated with 'nihonjinron' also influence perceptions of Japanese cultural identity. The description of Japanese people as a unique ethnic group affect perceptions of non-Japanese as 'different' and 'inferior'. Using the standpoint of 'nihonjinron', the language is also perceived to be a cornerstone of cultural identity. To be Japanese, an individual must be from Japan and Japanese-speaking. This is personified in the current social attitudes to 'nikkeijin' or ethnic Japanese immigrants from outside Japan, whose family left Japan in the late nineteenth or early 20th century and who are consequently non-Japanese speakers. Although the government is politically very supportive of 'nikkeijin', immigrants often struggle to obtain professional employment (Roth, 2005). An echo of the influence of 'nihonjinron' may be heard in Hayao Miyazaki's statement that he makes films for Japanese people and other people's views do not concern him (Miyazaki, 2009).

The concept of 'nihonjinron' embraces the idea that, even when non-Japanese people speak Japanese fluently, they are unable to understand the nuances of the language which originate from a Japanese world view. In psychological terms, this idea is aligned to the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Pinker, 1994) that linguistic structure influences a cognitive world view. In broader terms, a native Japanese film maker imparts messages to the native Japanese viewer which, potentially, other viewers will not receive due to their inability to 'think' in a Japanese way.

The final element of 'nihonjinron' relates to the significance of the extended family unit where a vertical hierarchy encourages conformity with the established norm. In this

group context, individualism is a negative trait which threatens the stability of Japanese society (discernible in the popularity of the 1990s cyberpunk genre). How far the discourse on anime is affected by 'nihonjinron' is of particular interest for this study in determining the extent to which specific signifiers for Japanese culture dominate the creative process. If the dominant characteristic of anime relates to an acceptance of a Japanese world view which fundamentally rejects external influences as non-Japanese, the evidence should be found in the texts. A counter influence to nihonjinron, the traditional Japanese acceptance of copying from 'masters' as a way to achieve excellence, is discussed in the next section.

4.2 The influence of Japanese aesthetic traditions

Another significant element in the proposal that anime is firmly embedded in a unique cultural context is found in anime's relationship with Japan's long tradition of visual aesthetics. The visual nature of Japanese culture extends from its pictorial written alphabets, its extensive artistic styles to the dominance of graphic literature. This visual dominance in both popular culture and 'high' art underpins the popularity of anime as a cinematic form in Japan.

A fundamental approach of Japanese visual culture lies in its acceptance of copying and copies as a means of creative expression, demonstrated by the 'utsushi' aesthetic previously described in Chapter 3. Unlike the Western search for uniqueness in art, in itself, copying is something to be valued. The copier strives to emulate the original and the viewer acknowledges the relationship between the original and the copy. In traditional theatre, the performance of actors is assessed on their ability to copy the acknowledged 'master' or expert interpreter. In calligraphy, the ability of the copier to interpret the 'expert'

copy measures their status.

Therefore this acceptance of copying, borrowing or emulating others who are acknowledged experts underpins not only art and theatre but also the development of animation where Japanese animators copied not only their own native traditions but also those of well-known animators outside Japan. Emulating non-Japanese animators can therefore be interpreted as not an attempt to replicate Hollywood animation per se, rather a continuation of 'utsushi' in a modern context to create high quality works.

A formalist interpretation of anime begins with the development of Japanese visual aesthetics in the twelfth century Heian period. Traditional art forms using paintings and wood prints ('yamato-e') were characterised by thin lines to denote facial expressions, 'hikime-kagihana', or a straight line for the eye and a hook to denote the nose. The technique to draw interiors, 'fukinuki-yatai', removed the roof (see Figure 5). These same techniques are used by limited cel animation as 'senga eiga' or 'line drawing film'. The technique draws attention to the mannerisms and facial expressions of individual characters always moving in their landscapes, telling the story.



Figure 5: 17th Century Illustration of 'Genji Monogatari' using 'Fukinuki-Yatai' technique

One of the most famous 'emakimono' or picture scrolls of the period, 'Genji Monogatari', was written by Murasaki Shikibu, a 'yokibito' or female member of the aristocracy. 'Genji Monogatari' has been described as the world's first novel with over 400 characters who age consistently during the story. It is written in instalments, full of rich poetic imagery, and with an emphasis on characterisation not plot, where characters react to their circumstance and events. The earliest surviving picture scroll of 'Genji Monogatari' dates from 12th century (Figure 6), although the story has been re-interpreted over the centuries using the visual aesthetics of individual periods.



Figure 6: 12th century Illustration of 'Genji Monogatari'

Later visual conventions are already evident in the early illustrations. The flat two dimensional drawing with no central reference point to indicate depth. Contemporary anime drawings illustrating the story of Genji demonstrate similarities with Heian visual approaches (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Anime version of 'Genji Monogatari' (Dezaki, 2008) showing Heian visual forms

The visual aesthetics of the Heian period influenced the later 'ukiyo-e' or Floating Island style prints of the Edo period (1603-1868) (see Figure 8). Ukiyo-e prints were mass-produced depicting well known events, Kabuki actors and fashionable landscapes. During the Edo period, the population of Edo (later Tokyo) grew to over a million people. A prosperous Samurai and merchant class provided the consumers for a large and well organised publishing industry. Print runs of 10,000 prints were not unusual with very detailed drawings depicting the minutiae of everyday life and special events (Tze-Yue, 2010). The best quality prints used a gradation of line, shade and colour to suggest realism in the drawings which is largely unchanged in modern anime.

'Ukiyo-e' prints regularly depicted Kabuki theatre which was one of the four theatrical traditions from the Edo period (1603-1868) onwards. Nogaku or Noh was another of the narrative dramatic forms. All the roles, male and female, are played by masked male actors. The main actor or 'shite' is first portrayed as a person and then as a ghost. The 'shite' role is always reflective and focused on introspection. This element is demonstrably visible in the anime films of Hayao Miyazaki and Mamoru Oshii where the main characters express their inner most thoughts in a way which directly contrasts with the depiction of the classic Hollywood cartoon character.



Figure 8: 'Ukiyo-e' print by Utagawa Kuniyoshi of a famous Kabuki actor and a carp kite

The continuation of this influence is also found in drawings by Miyazaki, for example the placing of characters without any adoption of Cartesian conventions (see Figure 9).



Figure 9: Miyazaki's drawing of the Totoros in the style of a ukiyo-e print

Another characteristic of traditional theatre is that of 'ma' or the 'silent breath' where actors pause to reflect in time and space, a reflection on the space between events. This aesthetic was defined by Zearni Motokiyo as 'senu tokoro ga omoshiroki', translated as, 'that which an actor does not do is interesting to the audience' (Komparu, 1983:70). Although an unusual device for orthodox animation where the narrative is defined by movement, anime demonstrates the influence of Noh theatre in its adoption of 'ma' (Tze-Yue, 2010). I outline the influence of 'ma' on Miyazaki's work in Chapter 5 in relation to the use of stillness within shots, and the management of space between frames in limited cel animation techniques.

The continuation of a traditional storytelling tradition, which developed detailed characterisation and wide ranging narratives accompanied by music, combined with a strong visual aesthetic, reflects an innate complexity in Japanese cultural forms which I suggest forms an explanation for how anime has developed as a distinct filmic form.

4.3 External influences

I have already referred to Tezuka's interpretation of conventional cel animation techniques in his short anime, 'Jumping'. Clearly in technical terms, Japan did not invent the techniques of cel animation nor the organisational structures which are required to mass produce the content. Equally, from the perspective of content and characterisation, Japanese animators have drawn their inspiration from external works and have been influenced by Japan's often difficult relationship with other countries. The globalisation of anime through diverse media and the development of anime industries in other countries

have themselves affected the direction of anime's creative output in Japan. In this section I examine how anime has used these external relationships to shape a Japanese world view.

4.3.1 South East Asia

Japan's relationship with other nations has often been problematic. In Asia, the proximity of China both influenced and threatened indigenous cultural forms. Japanese writing incorporates Chinese characters ('Kanji') alongside native Japanese 'Kana' (both 'Hiragana' and 'Katagana') characters. Chinese religions, both Buddhism and Confucianism, established themselves in Japan during the Nara period (710-794). Confucianism in particular was influential in governance and society with the Imperial court drawn up on Confucian principles. This had the effect of weakening the previously strong position of women in Japanese society. Although during the Heian period (794-1185), Japanese culture was the dominant influence, Chinese styles continued to be imported. In the Meiji period (1868-1912) and post Meiji period, Japanese expansionist strategies in Asia led to difficult relations with its neighbours. In the late twentieth centuries, economic rivalry has maintained the uneasy relationship, although the growth of consumerism in China has created a significant new market for Japanese anime. The two most significant barriers being government censorship and the widespread pirating of anime films.

Japanese anime is a popular media form in China with the one-child generation, born in the 1980s and 1990s. These children benefited from their parents' attention and wealth, driving a demand for anime. The Chinese government expressed concern in 2006 and began to discriminate against imports both to discourage anime's influence on young

people and to stimulate an indigenous animation industry. However, the result has been an increase in pirated copies of original anime and a quasi-official condoning of the misuse of Japanese anime studios' copyright (see Figure 10). In 2012, an official Chinese government organisation, the National Copyright Administration, announced that it was in discussions with Japanese anime copyright holders to purchase the copyright and establish a new web portal for Chinese anime fans. The Japanese government through the Japan Cultural Affairs Agency continued to put pressure on the Chinese government to do more to combat piracy. It issued the results of a survey which claimed that the anime industry lost 3,800 billion yen to pirated copies in the Chinese market. In July 2013, the Chinese National Copyright Administration denied the claims as unconvincing due to the methodology of the online survey. Collaboration does however exist. In 2011, TV Tokyo announced a three point strategy to combat Chinese piracy, namely to partner with a Chinese studio, stream the anime via the Internet and develop merchandise deals (Yamada, 2012).

In 2009, the China Central Television (CCT) broadcast 'Soul's Window' aimed at children. Certain scenes appeared to have been taken from a popular Japanese anime, 'Byousoku' *Five Centimetres per Second* (Shinkai, 2007). The event sparked a lively debate around the distinction between 'plagiarism' and 'creative inspiration' in south east Asian animation. Despite the industrial production of many anime series taking place in China due to the lower cost base and, as a result, there being a skilled workforce in cel production, political opposition has continued to limit co-production.



Figure 10: Examples of similar scenes between Chinese (top) and Japanese animations (below)

In December 2012, CCT screened a critical programme of the Japanese centre right government using the plot of a popular anime film, 'Meitantei Conan: Beika Sutorito no Borei' *Detective Conan: The Phantom of Baker Street* (Kodama, 2002). The film's plot involves the kidnapping of the children of Japan's political elite. CCT used this plot to emphasis what it considered to be nepotism at the heart of Japanese politics.

South Korea has also emerged as an industrial centre for both Hollywood series such as 'The Simpsons' and anime, although an indigenous Korean animation industry is still embryonic. The success of short animations such as 'Pororo' (Iconix, 2002) has generated \$36 million in merchandise globally. The business model follows the vertical integration of Japanese anime consortia.

However, on-line gaming has eclipsed animation in financial terms. Whereas in Japan, the need to sell video game consoles drove the market to produce video games, many based on original manga and anime from the 1980s, South Korea has a long established on-line gaming industry. In 2002 Gravity Corp released 'Ragnarok Online' which has over 25 million registered subscribers. The 'Lineage' franchise first released in 1998 has registered over 43 million users world-wide. The influence of South Korean

gaming franchises is likely to increase the pressure on anime to diversify even more into multi-modal forms.

4.3.2 European influence after 1868

Although Japan had little contact with the West until 1868, European traders particularly the Portuguese, had traded with the Tougawa Shogunate from the 1600s. After 1868, the sudden growth of trade and communication with Europe increased the demand for all things Japanese, particularly in France. The superb colour film archives of Albert Kahn, a Parisian banker, provide a unique glimpse into life in early twentieth century Japan, including a film of a Noh play (see Figure 11).



Figure 11: A Noh play filmed in 1912 (Albert Kahn Archives)

In Japan, the collapse of the Shogunate and the establishment of political structures stimulated discussions which included widespread debate regarding cultural styles and aesthetics. The establishment of public museums and art galleries on the European model encouraged a populist interest in visual art beyond the mass produced 'ukiyo-e' prints.

Divisions emerged between the adherents of classical Chinese and Japanese

aesthetics and those who embraced Western visual aesthetics. This process appeared to be less an assimilation of new elements into traditional forms, more the existence of two distinct competing aesthetics. There were instances of the influence of European movements stimulating interest in traditional Japanese techniques. William Morris' (1834-1896) Arts and Craft Movement sparked an interest in Japan in traditional craft skills. However, the supporters of 'wakon-yosai' concentrated on adopting the technology of industrialisation to move Japan forward. Japan was quick to realise the potential of the new technology of film for its own social purposes. Image building and symbolism was more quickly disseminated through the new technology, and in establishing a new modern state, film was a powerful communication tool.

4.4 Early cinematography

It was in this cultural context of change that Japan was exposed to early cinematography during the late Edo period. There was immediate interest in the magic lantern shows or 'utsushi-e' which were shown to large audiences at events, markets and theatres. The Japanese version was a wooden adaptation of the European steam device. The show was managed by at least three assistants quickly changing the lenses to mimic movement and accompanied by a 'shamisen' singer. A candle provided the illumination for the projection onto a wall. As many of the stories were traditional ghost stories, the flickering candle also probably added to the atmosphere for the show. Pictorial representations of European capitals were also very popular and provided Japanese viewers with their first glimpses of a representation of reality beyond traditional drawings as well as a view of what probably seemed to be a very alien external society.

This early technology reflected Japanese manufacturing expertise in the early nineteenth century – the first industrial factories did not appear until the beginning of the Meiji period in 1868. Under the Meiji restoration the 'utsushi-e' became associated with leisure and entertainment with the magic lantern 'gento' used to disseminate information to a mass audience. This varied from public health messages, education, world news and information on civil society. The government paid for the technology to be improved, realising that this mass medium was a potentially valuable mechanism for building the image of the new Japan.

4.5 Early Japanese cinema

Edison's kinetoscope arrived in Japan in 1896 only seven years after its invention. Its introduction to Japanese audiences was accompanied by a narrator, a 'benshi', which mimicked the use of the narrator and chorus in classic Japanese theatre. Following the opening of the first cinema in Tokyo in 1903, the 'benshi' became a central part of the cinematic experience. Their narration provided the excitement for the audiences who attended to hear famous 'benshi' perform. It is likely that the 'benshi' were cheaper to employ than sub-titling the imported films into Japanese. Their influence can also be seen in the aesthetic of Japanese films to extend the shot (originally so that the 'benshi' could finish long speeches). Indigenous film making was based in Tokyo and the ancient capital, Kyoto. The earliest surviving Japanese film dates from 1899 showing a performance by two of Kabuki's most famous actors. As only male actors took part in Kabuki, early films also avoided close up shots which would have exposed the male actors. The import of the talkies in the 1930s put the 'benshi' out of business. By then, the two main genres of early

Japanese cinema had emerged. Melodramas and comedies influenced by Western films were created in Tokyo. Traditional period dramas and Samurai films produced in Kyoto. From the silent film era, there was a sustained tradition of film criticism and reform. The 'Jun'eigageki undo' *Pure Film Movement* encouraged greater use of modern cinematic techniques through film magazines such as 'Kinema Record' (until 1917) and 'Kinema Junpo' (established in 1919).

The formation of the Motion Picture Control Committee in 1934 by the military government at a time when the Sino-Chinese war was starting to become more than a sporadic exchange led to greater control on the films produced. The government was aware of the potential reach of popular animation films. The establishment of the Fuji Film Company in 1934, with financial support from the government, improved the technical ability of animators to increase production. The ban on the import of foreign films gave a greater impetus to Japanese studios to increase production.

During the 1930s the government took an increasing interest in the ability of cinema to reach mass audiences with the commissioning of factual and feature propaganda films emphasising the sacrifice of Japanese soldiers culminating in the Film Law of 1939. The surviving examples from the period demonstrate an emphasis on military propaganda. The use of animal characters was borrowed both from the Disney films and from indigenous Shintoist beliefs. A blatant example survives in an eight minute animation, '*Omoichabako Shiriizu Daisanwa*', produced in 1934 where Japanese traditional heroes emerge from a picture book to help an island of animals defeat an army of mice (as a signifier for America's hero, Mickey Mouse).

In 1943, the Imperial military government commissioned 'Umi no Shinpei' (Mitsuya,

1944) (see Figure 12). The 37 minute animation depicted the Imperial Navy as brave animalistic sailors liberating Indonesia and Malaysia from the foreign enemy shown with horns (a signifier for the U.S. Navy). A 75 minute sequel released in 1945 used 50 animators and, in its style, borrowed heavily from the Russian 'Mir Iskusstva' artistic movement which emphasised individual expression and traditional folklore. The main character, 'Momotoro', provided a counterpoint to Disney's '*Mickey Mouse*'. Despite the pressure on animators, these examples demonstrate that the willingness to innovate and improve techniques continued throughout the war period.



Figure 12: Characters in 'Umi no Shinpei' (Mitsuya, 1944)

4.6 Early Japanese animation

One of challenges of studying anime is the lack of primary sources before 1940. The destructive forces of war between 1937 and 1945, an extremely humid climate and regular earthquakes (including the great Kanto earthquake of 1923 which destroyed most of Tokyo and the surrounding region) have limited the survival of early film. Surviving documentation confirms that the establishment of production studios provided the context for the growth of indigenous animated films. As with early action films, the first examples of animated film were imported from the United States and France around 1910. There was immediate interest from Japanese animators who would have been familiar with the

'utsushi-e' shows where 'ukiyo-e' block prints were shown in quick sequences. The influence of avant garde European cartoonists such as Emile Cohl (see Figure 13) stimulated Japanese animators such as Seitaro Kitayama (1888-1945) leading him to set up his own animation studio and write a book on animation techniques.



Figure 13: Still image from '*Fantasmagorie*' (Cohl, 1908)

Early Japanese animators collaborated with each other and employed apprentices who increased the capacity of the new industry. As part of the 'wakon-yosai', every effort was made to acquire the latest technology even though an offer to Eastman Kodak in America to advise the Japanese film industry in 1924 was rejected by the American company on the basis that the Japanese film industry had no future (Tze-Yue, 2010).

The Taisho period (1912-1926) was a very productive period for early animation when experimentation was encouraged and animation produced which included political satire as well as the more popular output. The reputation of the early animators as individuals who were innovative and creative was challenged by the import of early Disney cartoons made in a larger scale setting. Silent animations took around a month for the small Japanese atelier studios to produce. The more attractive Disney film with dialogue and sound effects required a greater capacity and at least three months to produce. The introduction of cel animation around 1928, enabled Japanese animators to produce films

more efficiently although the increased expense resulted in the cellular film being frequently re-used.

The popularity of the imported Disney films led to attempts to develop larger scale production. In the early 1930s, the socialist 'Nihon Proletaria Eiga Domei' or Proletarian Film League was established which produced a monthly film journal extolling Japanese workers. A screening of the anti-war animation 'Entotsuya Pero' (Tanaka, 1930) was shown to full cine mas although the police frequently raided showings of the film. Despite the mainly populist and humorous Disney competition, early Japanese animation attempted from the start to cover many themes from light entertainment to serious social comment. The early emphasis on a small group of individual animators producing high quality output is also a characteristic which developed into an acknowledgement of authorship rather than the anonymity of the large scale industrial studio production line. However despite attempts to collaborate, Japanese animation companies struggled to compete with Disney in terms of costs (Disney had already covered production costs in the American market before exporting its films outside the United States).

4.7 Post War Occupation 1945 - 1952

The destruction which followed defeat in 1945 and the dropping of the two atomic bombs was deeply traumatic for Japan as a nation. Initially there was widespread famine and the film industry collapsed. The American army of occupation was unfamiliar with Japanese social conventions and remained deeply suspicious of the film industry as a mechanism to encourage resistance to the occupation. Two hundred film prints were identified for destruction as being anti-democratic.

The Civil Information and Education Section (CIE) was established to censor film production. No references to revenge, nationalism, violence or patriotism were allowed. These restrictions impacted more severely on the traditional period dramas with stylised plots than on animation which was seen as modern and populist. The aims of the pre-war Japanese military government and the American army of occupation may have been very different however both recognised the power of mass communication. Indeed, animators were encouraged and financed by the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP) to produce 'suitable' films. The creation of the 'Nihon Manga Eiga Kabushiki Kaisha' (New Japan Animation Company) by around a hundred animators in 1946 was both a reaction to the threat of the CIE and an opportunity to take advantage of the financial backing offered by the occupying authority (Tze-Yue, 2010).

The symbolism of an eight minute animation, 'Maho no Pen' (Kumagawa, 1946), (see Figure 14) illustrated the struggle between pre-war social norms and the new democratic order required by the occupying force. A little orphan boy picks up a Western-style doll and falls asleep in his English lesson. In his dream his doll comes to life and offers him a magic pen to draw whatever he likes. He draws a world of new buildings and roads displayed within the ruins of the city. At the end, the doll says goodbye and drives away in her new American car. The symbolism is clear, America is Japan's friend who will help build the new world, but a world predicated on American values and institutions.



Figure 14: Characters in 'Maho no Pen' (Kumagawa, 1946)

It is possible to follow a preoccupation with image building from the early days of Japanese animation through to the modern emphasis on 'soft power' (Nye, 1990), the use of a popular medium to promote a positive view of Japan and Japanese society. I have already referred to Iwabuchi's (2002) use of Nye's concept in the context of Japanese culture in Chapter 2.

The end of occupation in 1952 was a catalyst for a renewed interest in Japanese films both within Japan, and more specifically, in the United States and Europe. Japanese feature films made by respected directors such as Kurosawa, Ozu, Mizoguchi and Honda began to receive recognition outside of Japan, winning prestigious awards for their directors. The new debate on the significance of auteurship in film production, led by members of the post-war French New Wave movement, highlighted the individualism of Japanese film directors. However in the context of Japanese cultural history, as has been outlined earlier, this emphasis on individual introspection and reflection continues a long held aesthetic tradition.

4.8 The post war development of anime

4.8.1 Development of production facilities

The pre-war investment in indigenous creative industries was seriously disrupted after 1941. However, as already noted, animation companies were encouraged during the occupation to re-form. Tokyo Movie Shinsha (TMS) established in 1946 was typical of the new animation companies. It continues to produce animations for companies outside Japan as well as for the home market. Post war production facilities were re-built using the expertise and skills of surviving Japanese animators working within a production process adapted from the Hollywood studio system. However, the majority of companies remained small scale with labour intensive production processes. Animators were poorly paid using piece rate based on the number of frames drawn. As Miyazaki later noted, the pressure to hand draw many thousands of cel drawings, often on low wages, led to a highly unionised workplace (Miyazaki, 2009). This business model initially constrained the growth of the Japanese animation industry in the 1940s and early 1950s.

However two significant developments, the establishment of Toei Doga in 1956 and the work of Osamu Tezuka in the 1960s, demonstrated that the anime industry was capable of capitalising on new opportunities provided by a more affluent society and new media such as television and video. The management structures established by Toei Doga provided a model for other anime studios to develop efficient production processes, building on a traditional respect for innovative visual imaging. Osamu Tezuka provided creative leadership for post-war Japanese animators to develop a distinctive visual style and aesthetic which took anime beyond conventional orthodox animation. Both visual imaging and organisational structures borrowed from the Hollywood experience, however

the success of Japanese anime from the 1960s was firmly embedded in Japanese cultural aesthetics.

4.8.2 The influence of Toei Doga

In 1948, 'Nihon Doga Eiga' (Japan Animated Films) was founded as a new animation studio. It was taken over in 1956 by Toei and re-named 'Toei Doga' (Toei Animation). 'Toei Doga' is an interesting example of the post-war growth of animation studios in Japan. The creative style acknowledged the earlier structure of the atelier studio with individual animators encouraged to bring ideas to the production process. This approach contrasts with the more formulaic structure at Disney where animators were apportioned work centrally. Toei's approach mirrors the structures found at later studios such as Madhouse (1972) and Studio Ghibli (1985). Toei encouraged auteurship and several of Japan's most well-known animators were trained by Toei such as Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata.

'Toei Doga' also pioneered the development of limited cel animation techniques. Yasuo Otsuka developed 'money shot' scenes, those scenes which were crucial for the audience's understanding and therefore needed detailed line drawings. The rest of the film was created using limited animation which required less investment of staff time. Limited cel animation was undoubtedly a technique to save money as drawings were produced more rapidly. However its acceptance in Japan was also due to its reliance on a minimalist visual aesthetic which drew on the long tradition of Japanese visual culture already outlined.

'Toei Doga' was responsible for 'Hakujaden' (Yabushita, 1958), the first Japanese full length colour anime film which directly competed with Disney's output. The film influenced many directors – Miyazaki credits 'Hakujaden' as being the reason that he became an animator (Miyazaki, 2009). He particularly admired the strong female character who was a contrast to the typical Disney characterisation of animation heroines (see Figure 15). There is evidence that the animators who worked together on the film saw its creation as a means of 're-birth' after the disaster of war (Tze-Yue, 2010). The 'shudan' or collective effort negated the more anonymous industrial process which was inevitably required to produce a major animation film. Nearly fourteen thousand animators worked on the film which took two years to complete.

The choice of a traditional Chinese fairy story for the film's plot was an attempt by Toei's Chairman to build bridges with China. Japan's poor reputation in south east Asia following the military imperialism of the early twentieth century had resulted in a ban on Japanese films in South Korea and Taiwan. Toei therefore focused its marketing efforts mainly on Europe and America. The high production values of the film was seen as a means of encouraging interest from Western companies to contract animation work with Toei.



Figure 15: Hand drawn scene from 'Hakujaden' (Yabushita, 1958)

'Toei Doga' is also notable for another typical characteristic of Japanese anime, the close relationship between the animated output and associated manga. The studio pioneered the animation of popular manga, and in doing so established distinct anime sub-genres. The animation of Mitsuteru Yokoyama's manga 'Mahoutsukai Sally' (Katsuta, 1966) as a television series popularised the magical girl sub-genre. Similarly, the animation of Go Nagai's manga, 'Mazinger Z' (Serikawa, 1972), established the extensive and popular Super Robot sub-genre. The most successful pioneer of this symbiotic relationship was Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989).

4.8.3 The influence of Osamu Tezuka (1928- 1989)

Osamu Tezuka trained as a medical doctor but started to draw at an early age. His childhood in Osaka included visits to the Takarazuka Theatre where all the parts were played by women (a direct contrast to Kabuki theatre). Tezuka much admired the design and costumes of the shows which influenced his later anime designs. He initially worked as manga artist and produced over 500 works during his career (Tezuka Production, 2007). Tezuka created several of the key visual characteristics of modern manga and anime, for example, the large eyes of many characters. This style he attributed to his

admiration for early Hollywood animators such as Max Fleischer ('*Betty Boop*') and Walt Disney ('*Mickey Mouse*'). Tezuka's visual style was more fluid and filmic with obvious sound effects.

In 1952, Tezuka published the first series of the manga 'Tetsuwan Atom', later translated into English as '*Astro Boy*'. The plot imagined an idealised world where humans and technology lived in harmony. It is possible to read 'Tetsuwan Atom' as an attempt to rationalise the fear of advanced technology and war which the dropping of the atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki had generated in Japanese society. 'Tetsuwan Atom' is a robot boy created to replace Dr Tenma's son, Tobio, who was killed in an accident. Dr Tenma later rejects Tetsuwan and he is sold to a cruel circus owner. He is rescued by a kind scientist and becomes a super hero, fighting mad robots or alien threats (see Figure 16). Tezuka explores the human/ robot relationship which became a central theme of later anime.



Figure 16: An Example of Tezuka's manga 'Tetsuwan Atom' (1952)

Tezuka realised that the new medium of television was far better suited to the anime format than feature films. As previously mentioned, Tezuka was influenced in this decision by the success of the Hollywood Hanna-Barbera cartoon series of the 1950s. In 1961 Tezuka formed his own production company, Mushi, which, at its height, employed over four thousand people and which produced an anime version of 'Tetsuwan Atom' in 1963. This series was viewed by around 40% of the Japanese population who owned a television and also became the first anime series to be sold outside Japan (see Figure 17).



Figure 17: English Poster for 'Astro Boy' (Ladd, 1965)

The success of 'Tetsuwan Atom' led to the production of 'Janguru Teitei' in 1965 as a manga, anime film and anime television series. Tezuka pioneered the expansion of animated film into diverse media, another characteristic of Japanese anime. The format and the continuity which weekly serials for the cinema and television provided enabled

animators to devise more complex narratives and characterisation (Napier, 2005). It is interesting to compare Tezuka's version of 'Janguru Teitei' with the American version, translated as '*Kimba – The White Lion*' (see Figure 18). The differences reflect differing attitudes to the animation genre in 1960s America and Japan, which continued to diverge as anime further developed as a genre.

Characteristic	Japanese Version	American Version
Title	' <i>Janguru Teitei</i> ' (Jungle Emperor)	' <i>Kimba – The White Lion</i> '
Director	Each Yamamoto	Fred Ladd
Producer	Fuji TV	NBC
Plot	Hero dies in the final episode Hero's life from childhood to adult included Climax on Mount Moon	Hero survives the final battle Only the hero's childhood included No climactic moment
Theme	Hero has to fight all his life to achieve his objective Outlines his whole life and his moral development	Much less emphasis on battles and sacrifice Cheerful stories with the hero always on top
Characterisation	Emotive	Humorous
Target Audience	Adults and children	Children

Figure 18: Comparison between 'Janguru Teitei' and '*Kimba – The White Lion*'

Tezuka's important influence on the development of anime went beyond visual techniques and narrative format. His plots demonstrate an intrinsically reflective attitude, typical of traditional literary forms. His heroes are self-sacrificing, they worry about the meaning of life and survival. His imagined worlds explore the meaning of reality and fantasy. These characteristics are mirrored by later auteurs, including Hayao Miyazaki. The significance of Osamu Tezuka's work is thus two fold. He demonstrated the continuity

which anime represents with traditional literary approaches for narrative and characterisation; and technically, he progressed anime into a distinctive visual style which borrows from non-Japanese sources, yet is also compatible with traditional Japanese visual aesthetics.

4.9 Diversity in the 1970s, 80s and 90s

The Japanese film industry struggled to compete with television in the 1960s. By 1961 in Japan there were four public colour television services and four private colour television services with around thirteen million black and white and colour television sets. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics was a significant catalyst in the purchase of colour television sets and it was estimated that 85% of the Japanese population viewed the event on television. Japanese electronics companies such as Hitachi expanded to meet the growing demand.

As the film studios made animators redundant, they joined new smaller companies creating weekly anime television serials. The growth in cable television resulted in a need to fill airtime which the pattern of long series with linked story lines provided by anime was well suited (Drazen, 2003). The video market added a new distribution medium. Between 1975 and 1990, over thirteen million video recorders were sold in Japan. Original Anime Video (OAV) or Original Video Anime (OVA) was developed for the home video market. OAV animation is usually of a higher quality than TV animation and often used to distribute stories which are too long for the cinema but do not contain enough content for television series. Therefore during the 1970s and 1980s, film, television and video provided the

diversity of distribution which enabled anime studios to flourish.

One of the most popular anime series of the 1990s was 'Shin Seiki Evangerion' *Neon-Genesis Evangelion* (Anno, 1995) which was much admired by Azuma (1996). The film represented a surreal mixture of Christian, Jewish and Japanese traditions. The story is set in the third city to be located in Tokyo as the previous two cities had been drowned as a result of global warming. The main characters are fourteen year old children who pilot giant cyborgs, EVAs in an eternal war with other cyborgs known as Angels. The series is a bleak reflection on the loss of humanity and parental rejection of children and was heavily edited for its original television showing. One of the main characters, Shinji, is torn between his dislike of the robot units he pilots and his desperation for his father's love. As such, Shinji is a reluctant hero and technology is a necessary evil. Although humans need the machines to defeat the Angels, the humans themselves are flawed in what they want the technology to achieve.

The series is noteworthy for this study in being an example of the multi-media franchise which represents the evolution of anime in the global digital age. The original series led to video games, manga, posters, with a catalogue of merchandise of nearly one hundred and fifty pages.

4.9.1 Establishing the anime industry

Alongside the importance of Japanese cultural factors and visual aesthetics in demonstrating the distinctiveness of anime, the modes of production require critical analysis. During the 1970s, anime developed a more coherent commercial structure which focused on innovation as well as increasing content production. The establishment of the

Japan Animation Film Association in 1971 (re-named the Japan Animation Association in 1978) provided a framework for the production, discussion and critical review of anime texts. Bi-annual film festivals provided a platform for new talent and further debate on sub-genres (Tze-Yue, 2010). The influential Tokyo Image Forum founded in 1977 encouraged independent animators to produce high quality work. In 1985 the establishment of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival promoted independent animators and commercial studios to produce work for international competitions. Experimental anime also benefited from these opportunities to collaborate, for example, the work of Kihachiro Kawamoto, which included Noh theatre music and stylistic movements, was also influenced by the Czech puppet animator, Jiri Trnka. As a result of these developments, by the 1980s, anime was 'framed' through distinctive boundaries.

4.9.2 Emergence of sub-genres

A particularly distinctive characteristic of how anime is framed is the presence of sub-genres, each with a distinct visual style, characterisation and narrative. In accepting Fowler's (1989) proposal that genres are central to the reading of texts, the distinctions between anime's sub-genres do not detract from the boundedness of the main genre. I suggest that the existence of these sub-genres strengthens anime's difference from orthodox cel animation as they demonstrate that there is a depth and complexity to anime which is absent in Hollywood animation.

For Napier (2001) there are three main anime styles, festival, elegiac and apocalyptic. Festival (in Japanese, 'matsuri') represents the concept described by Mikhail

Bakhtin (1984) as the 'carnival' tradition exemplified by the work of Rabelais. At carnival time the accepted social order and structures were deliberately ignored and everyone mixed together as one body. The comic consequences of mistaken identity, gender change and sexual roles are represented by the festival style. Elegiac represents a feeling of loss and mourning associated with changing traditions. Many anime films reflect on a loss of harmony whether it relates to human relationships with one another, nature or even magical creatures. Apocalyptic represents a style associated with technology, robots and cyberpunk narratives in dystopian worlds. These definitions are helpful in simplifying discussion relating to the large quantities of anime output which have very complex sub-genres associated with the target Japanese audiences for the original manga.

The main themes for anime are complementary to Napier's three styles. There are global themes such as human interaction with nature, the magic or spirit world, parallel universes; cultural themes such as folk tales, Japanese history; social themes such as family, work and school life; and main stream genres such as science fiction, pornography and horror. Anime is therefore a microcosm of film genre and this comprehensive and varied output is in direct contrast to Hollywood animation output which is still primarily geared for a family audience. Napier's pioneering work has stimulated an increasing response on the specific expression of creative content which falls within the scope of anime, particularly the outputs of influential directors.

One important theme established in the 1950s was the relationship between humans and technology. Among the most influential anime was Toei Doga's adaptation of Go Nagai's 'Majinga Zetto' *Mazinger Z* (Serikawa, 1972-74). The plot followed the adventures of enormous mechanical flying robots controlled by an (invariably teenage)

human pilot which defended humans against alien invaders. This approach, later known as mecha anime, was characterised by a fusion between the human controller and the robot in controlling the machine. Transformation was achieved through the interaction between human and machine. 'Majinga Zetto' and the sequels 'Guerto Majinga 'Great Mazinger and 'UFO Robo Grendizer' *UFO Robot Grendizer* ran from 1972 to 1977. By the mid-1980s there had been over 40 different giant-robot anime series shown on most television channels. These television anime series, subtitled on Japanese-community TV channels in America, began the interest in anime among American sci-fi audiences which Patten (2004) noted. Taking Choo's identification of anime motifs which have transferred to Hollywood films, it is possible to map the spread of the influence from the 1980s to the present day (see Figure 19).

Anime Motif	Anime Source	Hollywood Film
Insectoid machines	Kokaku Kidotai <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Oshii, 1995) Appurushido <i>Appleseed</i> (Aramaki, 2004)	<i>The Terminator</i> (Cameron, 1984) <i>The Matrix</i> (Wachowski, 1999)
Three point landing	Shin Seiki Evangerion <i>Neon- Genesis Evangelion</i> (Anno,1995)	<i>Spiderman 2</i> (Raimi, 2002)
Cracking the cement	Shin Seiki Evangerion <i>Neon- Genesis Evangelion</i> (Anno,1995)	<i>Iron Man</i> (Favreau, 2008)
Powering up the character	AKIRA (Otomo, 1988)	<i>X-Men: First Class</i> (Vaughn, 2011)
Visible psychic battles	AKIRA (Otomo, 1988)	<i>Dark City</i> (Proyas,1998)
Energy balls	AKIRA (Otomo, 1988)	<i>Spiderman 2</i> (Raimi, 2002)
Weaponised woman	Kokaku Kidotai <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Oshii, 1995)	<i>Resident Evil: Retribution</i> (Anderson,2012)
Neo-noir cityscapes	AKIRA (Otomo, 1988)	<i>Dark City</i> (Proyas,1998), <i>The Matrix</i> (Wachowski, 1999)
Speeding movement, static moments	Kokaku Kidotai <i>Ghost in the Shell</i> (Oshii, 1995)	<i>The Matrix</i> (Wachowski, 1999)

Figure 19: Anime Motifs used by Hollywood Films (after Choo, 2008)

Developed at a time when Japan was the leading technological country of the world, mecha anime explored the limits of what it was to be human and be real. This narrative was often explored in dystopian cyberpunk landscapes. By the mid-1980s there had been over 40 different giant-robot anime series shown on most television channels.

Mecha anime was accompanied by sci-fi adventures beginning in 1974 with 'Uchu Senkan Yamato' *Space Battleship Yamato* (Matsumoto) which could be described as an attempt to replay World War II, with the united Earth armies (or Japan) fighting from planet to planet across the galaxy (the Pacific) against the conquering Gamilon invaders (the Allies). 'Uchu Senkan Yamato' benefited from the highly popular *Star Wars* (Lucas, 1977, 1980, 1983) films which were well received by Japanese audiences as they contained several references to Japanese culture. The term 'Jedi' references the Japanese word 'Jidaigeki,' used to describe historical films including Samurai narratives. Lucas voiced his admiration for the Japanese film director Kurosawa, particularly his film 'Kakushi Toride no San Akunin' *Hidden Fortress* (Kurosawa, 1958), in the use of minor characters to tell the story (Patten, 2004). A dubbed English language version, '*Space Blazers*' was shown in America and an Italian version also produced. '*Space Blazers*' renamed the ship, the Argo, with a slightly mixed theme of Greek myth and Japanese animation. Matsumoto went on to create other highly successful television and OAV anime such as 'Shin Taketori Monogatari: Sennen Joo' *The Queen of 1,000 Years* (1978), 'Ginga Tetsudo Suri Nain' *Galaxy Express 999* (1999).

'AKIRA' (Otomo, 1988) was the number one box office film in Japan in 1988, but, as a sign of the growing recession, was not a financial success. Its significance was as a catalyst in introducing a form of cyberpunk anime to new audiences outside of Japan.

Napier (2001) considered the criticism of the bleakness of many mecha anime films, including the claim that such films influenced the poisonous gas attack on the Tokyo subway by the Aum Shinrikyo cult in 1995, and argued that there was no evidence to link tragic events to the fantasy worlds depicted in anime. The relationship between reality and fantasy is a constant discourse in anime and Japanese audiences draw on a long tradition of narratives depicting parallel existences in consuming anime.

Cyberpunk also influenced 'Shiriaru Ekusuperimentsu Rein' *Serial Experiments Lain* (Nakamura, 1998). Lain, a fourteen year old girl, is told that a friend has committed suicide. She then receives an e-mail from her friend telling Lain that she has not died but has got rid of her body to live in the Wire, an Internet-type network. Lain become absorbed by the Wire, growing in power as she changes her identity, visually expressed in the film as being strangled by wires. The film's animators explained that, in developing a story about the nature of reality, they were influenced by many writers, including Lewis Carroll (one of the characters is named Alice). Brown (2006) perceived Lain's predicament as having parallels in the real world where interactive anime fans are also in danger of being drawn into the control of machines which have no social or family responsibilities (the anonymous Internet). He suggested that Nakamura's film demonstrates a complexity in the way that universal concepts such as what is reality can be developed creatively without the addition of violence. The film could be described as a psychological thriller with the tension quietly expressed through Lain's loss of herself. Nakamura stated in interviews that he conceived the idea using Japanese values of 'family'. The Wire is an alien, anonymous environment which cannot give Lain what she needs in her lonely life. He assumed that American audiences would not understand the complex message but admitted that the

audience reaction seemed to be similar in both Japan and America.

The anti-war emphasis in anime narratives is understandable in a nation which has suffered from a nuclear war in recent memory. The use of an apocalypse or fantastic event has become a familiar device for anime directors. Usually, as in '*Kokaku Kidota*' (Oshii, 1995) and '*AKIRA*' (Otomo, 1988), the event takes place in the future or on another usually dystopian world. Unusually therefore, '*Hotaru no Haka*' *Grave of the Fireflies* (Takahata, 1988) took a horrific semi-autobiographical experience of the Second World War to express the human cost of war. Two orphans struggle to live in a post war Japan where famine leads to the death by starvation of little Setsuko despite the best efforts of her brother, Seita. The spirits of the two children tell the story in flashback as fireflies, a symbol of the brief nature of life. The setting in a real life event makes the narrative unbearably poignant as her brother desperately tries to find food for her in a society where nobody cares. Considering the importance that Japanese society places on family responsibilities, this was a shocking film which marked a new direction for anime and which has few equivalents in the Hollywood animation tradition.

The creation of fantasy worlds in parallel universes formed a major incentive for creative anime directors. An influential film in this sub-genre was '*Kaze no tani no Naushika*' *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (Miyazaki, 1984). The story explores the environmental themes between humans and their relationship with the natural world. The anime established Miyazaki as a major director and enabled him to establish his own studio, Studio Ghibli, in 1985.

Anime which is primarily aimed at children, the sub-genres 'kodiak' and 'moe' (cute) more closely resemble the characteristic features of Hollywood animation. However, even

here, there are examples of a subversion of the normal definition of happy, comic plots. *'Doraemon'* (Ohanashi, 2006) is a lovable cat from the future who helps his friend Nobita, a bullied boy. Doraemon does not conform to the Hollywood genre norm. He only returns to help Nobita because he is concerned about Nobita's future descendants in the twenty second century who refuse to stand up to bullies. He decides to help the original Nobita so that future generations will be able to function fully as a family. This concern for family responsibilities is a typical Japanese social response and its emphasis in this anime demonstrates the way in which anime reflects social norms in Japan. As a reflexive action, high tech robots made by Sony replicated the look of anime characters such as Doraemon (see Figure 20).



Figure 20: Sony PaPeRo Robots



Doraemon Anime Character

The more esoteric sub-genres are ones not found in cinematic traditions outside of Japan. Attitudes towards gender play a part. The traditionally submissive role of females in Japanese society is challenged in the development of 'maho shojo' or magical girl anime where the heroines have strong feminine roles. The anime series 'Maho Kishi Reiasu' *Magic Night Reyearth* (Hirano, 1995) is a typical example which follows three school girls

who are transported from Tokyo to a parallel universe where they battle sci-fi monsters (see Figure 21). The plot is reminiscent of the Narnia novels by C. S. Lewis. As in C S Lewis' novels, the children play a crucial role in the destiny of their new world. Portrayed as typical schoolgirls in their home world, the girls are powerful, although still feminine, fighters who are the heroes of their new home. The popularity of this role change amongst female's audiences emphasises the limitations which traditional Japanese social convention placed on female behaviour. By locating the story in a parallel world, the expectations of 'normal' behaviour are not overturned. As with the Narnia stories, the girls behave with the authority of adults, something which was not possible in the real world.



Figure 21: Characters in 'Mahou Kishi Reiasu' (Hirano, 1995)

'Shonen-ai' (see Figure 22) is an interesting variation which superficially appear to be stories of gay love depicting beautiful young men. This sub-genre is however primarily aimed at girls as a variation of the female gaze. For Drazen, “these stories about gay love are simply a means by which the gender barrier can be temporarily removed to allow for a

more general discussion about the meaning and nature of romantic love” (Drazen, 2003: 90).



Figure 22: Typical 'shonen-ai' Image

The other side of the gender debate, 'shonen' anime is aimed at young men. This includes the action sub-genres already identified, mecha and science fiction. The common device of 'fan sabisu' or fan service scenes which are designed to please the viewer rather than advance the plot are characteristic of 'shonen-ai' anime. Russell (2008) described this device, which can be extended violence or erotic scenes, as the 'glimpse', rather than the longer 'gaze' (Mulvey, 1975). A device which hints at something potentially disturbing but is ultimately reassuring.

These sub-genre, together with 'hentai', are reflexive in the way that they reflect social issues in Japan. Around forty 'hentai' or adult anime are released on the OAV market each month. 'Hentai' follows a long tradition of Japanese erotic visual aesthetics. Its popularity has raised issues of moral panic from non-Japanese commentators. In 1996 the British Board of Film Classification refused a certificate for the DVD of the comedy science fiction 'hentai' series *'La Blue Girl'* (Fukumoto, 1992). 'Hentai' anime includes a

wide range of plots and themes and essentially reflects a Japanese attitude to nudity and the depiction of reality. Its presence alongside the other major sub-genres re-emphasises the more complex boundaries of anime as a genre and its distinctiveness from orthodox Hollywood animation.

Anime heroes often do not demonstrate typical Western heroic behaviour and the lines between 'good' and 'bad' characters are blurred (Pointon, 1997). This characterises anime as being very different from the Hollywood animation tradition. Levi (2001) outlined the main differences between Western and Japanese heroes as being:

“Heroism in most manga and anime is internal: heroes must be sincere and they must be selfless, at least at the moment of heroism. It is not necessary for a manga or anime hero to be a saint, to fight for the right side, or even to be successful. Anyone who sincerely gives his or her best efforts to almost any task can be a hero... the Japanese concept of heroism exists apart from ideology or victory”. (Levi, 2001: p.42)

This ambiguity between 'right' and 'wrong' caused concern amongst American distributors. Anime was already associated with sex and violence through the popularity of adult anime. In the marketing of 'Mononoke Hime' *Princess Mononoke* (Miyazaki, 1997), Disney as the American distributor, repeatedly disassociated the film from anime, referring to it as 'not anime...it's not effects driven or violence driven'. (Patten, 2004: 111). This moral panic was influenced to some degree by the fact that in 2001 around 30% to 40% of anime viewed in America was linked to pornography (Lent, 2001).

Another popular anime theme that of uncertainty regarding the future, is perhaps understandable in a nation which has suffered so much from war and famine in the last hundred years. It is also an inherent part of the Japanese religion Shinto. As a life force, 'kami' pervades all things in a harmonious way. To experience 'kami', a person must have

a cheerful outlook or 'kokoro'. When a person's 'kokoro' is clouded by poor behaviour it is similar to a polluted river which must be washed clear by acting with 'makoto' or sincerity. The films of Hayao Miyazaki pay homage to the Shinto tradition in a uniquely Japanese way. As previously outlined in 4.2, the influence of traditional Japanese myths and legends and the visual influence of Japanese dramatic theatrical traditions such as Noh and Kabuki provide a rich context for anime as a genre. Tezuka was clearly influenced by the Shinto religion creation myths in the manga story of 'Hi no Tori' *The Phoenix* (Tezuka, 1955). Shinto is an animistic religion with many gods which are to be feared. The combination of Shinto's awareness of nature and current environmental issues can be seen not only in 'Mononoke Hime' *Princess Mononoke* (Miyazaki, 1997) but also in mecha anime such as 'Gunnm' *Battle Angel* (Kushiro, 1990) where it can be additionally interpreted as reflecting a Buddhist fear of the replacement of body parts by technology.

An interesting elegiac theme concerns anime's treatment of memory. A traditional Japanese aesthetic 'mono no aware', the awareness of the 'sadness of things' or the transitory nature of beauty has influenced many anime films (Cavallaro, 2009). One example is Kon's film 'Sennen Joyu' *Millennium Actress* (2001) which follows the memories of an eighty year old actress, Chiyoko Fujiwara, as she recollects her actual life woven into her theatrical life through her films. The film highlights a very traditional Japanese attitude to the use of memory as a motif for time passing.

Anime is thus a complex and visually rich film form which demonstrates the influence of traditional cultural and religious traditions whilst borrowing from Western models of film production.

4.9.3 Anime's visual language

A very visible differentiation between anime and orthodox cel animation is the existence of a distinct visual language for anime which is derived from Japanese Visual Language or JVL for manga (Cohn, 2010). The iconography of anime is stable enough to make it immediately recognisable to viewers, thus complying with the requirements for film genre which requires the viewer to relate to the on-screen representation (Altman, 1999). However, this stability also provides evidence of distinctiveness. The symbolic devices may be read semiotically in association with a Japanese world view. The 'kei yu' or symbols for emotion, include abstract backgrounds, the exaggeration of eye movements, popping a vein (anger), sweat drop (embarrassment), bleeding nose (perverseness) or to demonstrate a change of pace, such as a 'chibi' change where the characters become rounder to indicate that a comedy scene is coming up.

This iconography is widespread in Japan, being used as 'kaomoji' or emoticons on mobile texting and online (Katsuno & Yano, 2002). Speed lines for motion are also used differently in Japan to American animation where the speed lines follow an object which is static rather than following an object drawn as if it is moving. This appears to give a more subjective view to the viewer that the viewer and the object view the same reality (McCloud, 2004). The linkage between anime's visual language and Japanese cultural iconography strengthens the distinctiveness of anime as film genre. The influence of Zen Buddhism may be seen in anime in the characteristic where visual symbols are more meaningful than dialogue (Tze-Yue, 2010).

Whorf (1962) proposed that language is a cultural phenomenon as the individual's understanding of the world is dependent on language competence. Using this approach, a

shared understanding and world view can only be achieved by people speaking the same language. Although anime is primarily a visual product, language also holds a significant part in the interpretation of the text (Azuma, 2009). Normal spoken Japanese (referred to as standard Japanese or SJ), tends to be used by conventional anime characters. Japanese Women's Language (also referred to as JWL) is generally voiced by gentle female characters (Inoue, 2003). Other conventions include the Osaka dialect which symbolises comic characters and the Tohoku dialect which is used for rural characters. Non-Japanese characters tend to speak in stereotypical terms, for example, Native Americans are portrayed raising their hand and saying 'How'. The substitution of non-Japanese dialogue beyond Japan has created its own dynamic with the Internet and social media networks acting as a crowd sourcing medium. Fan subs or non-professional translations represent the direct impact of anime on cultural consumption more globally.

4.9.4 The influence of 'otaku' fans

The audience for anime in Japan is ubiquitous due to the high number of sub-genres produced and the range of formats including film, television, OVA on DVD, web-based streaming and gaming. Children exposed to manga and anime at an early age, continue to consume content into adulthood. The growth of unofficial fan networks where anime video music or AMV (favourite anime clips set to music), fan stories (additional plots for popular anime) and extended characterisation (Azuma, 2009) provide a rich context for the discourse on anime. Some producers were apparently relaxed by this breach of copyright by the fans, known as 'dojinshi' or self-creation. Comiket was established in Tokyo in 1975 as a convention for 'dojinshi'. It now attracts over half a million people and

large number of unofficial texts are displayed and traded. The development of otaku fanbases was viewed with some suspicion within Japan. Otaku do not conform to social norms of behaviour. The obsessional tendency implies a rejection of community life and a retreat into fantasy worlds. Yet, as previously outlined in 2.3, otaku culture is argued by some commentators (Lamarre, 2009; Azuma, 2009) to be an important post-modern influence on the production of anime because of its constituency power.

The establishment of Gainax Studio in 1983 as Daicon Film by Okada Tashio, Hideaki Anno and a group of friends exemplified this approach. The Studio began in 1981 as a collaboration of otaku who produced short animations for film festivals. Gainax emerged as a commercial entity in 1985 and co-produced several successful anime series. Its most notable success to date being 'Shin Seiki Evangerion' *Neon-Genesis Evangelion* (Anno, 1995), the apocalyptic mecha anime franchise which diversified into a television series, manga, live action film and amusement park. Lamarre (2002) argued that the 'Gainax discourse' on anime traces an historical legacy from Tezuka to Anno, with (mainly male) animators inheriting and innovating one another's creative output. Hiroki Azuma (2010) polarised the debate as the fans preference for characterisation over narrative. This discourse debates the importance of anime aesthetics as between the visual image which enables fans to categorise characters into anime 'databases' and storytelling. As otaku repeatedly view anime texts, they identify slight differences of detail and style which are endlessly analysed and categorised. In effect, otaku are as interested in the characters as the authors and directors to the extent that they become co-creators with the Studios, even if most of them will not establish their own studio on the Gainax model. Yet this becomes problematic as the role of the otaku is as an individual, focused

on his/her interpretation not to contribute to a collaborative function. Is it possible even to define a viewer as otaku except by the degree of interest and engagement? Hill's (2002) description of the cult fan emphasised the loyalty shown to individual anime series or films long after their disappearance from public view.

4.10 Anime in the twenty first century

Anime in Japan declined in popularity in the 1990s as the country entered a prolonged economic recession. Japanese annual economic growth declined from 4% to 1.5%. Trade discussions with the United States focused on Japan's huge trade surpluses. In order to protect important strategic industries such as the electronic sector, the film industry was de-regulated to allow greater competition from abroad, particularly Hollywood. In 1997, the financial sector in East Asia crashed adding to the economic pressure on film studios which found it harder to obtain venture capital (Davis & Yeh, 2008). The growth of Studio Ghibli (Miyazaki and Takahata) and Madhouse (Kon and Hosoda) demonstrated that high quality anime feature films could still succeed. Miyazaki won the Oscar for Best Animated film in 2002 and in 2003, the Wachowskis produced nine anime films, *'The Animatrix'* based on *'The Matrix'* films. Quentin Tarantino included an anime sequence in his film, *'Kill Bill 1'* (2003).

In 2004, the Japanese government protected the copyright of its cultural industries with a new law. The global marketing of anime following success in Western film festivals increased sales in America, Europe and South East Asia. The influence of anime on Western animators such as John Lasseter, Pixar and Disney extended the visual

aesthetics of anime to the new field of digital and 3-D animation. The Japanese government sought to capitalise on the growing profile of anime with the appointment of a popular anime character, 'Doraemon', as an official ambassador for Japan. The symbolism of electing a fictional cultural icon in a 'real' role raises interesting questions of social attitudes towards anime. Takeshi Murakami expressed criticism of Doraemon's status as demonstrating the Japanese reliance on machines to solve their problems.

However the trading conditions for Japanese anime have adversely affected the development of the industry. Delays in licensing restricts the release of anime in new formats, for example Blu-ray. The strong yen also resulted in exported anime being uncompetitive with Hollywood animation. Leading Japanese anime studios however continue to target Western audiences, for example 'Redline' (Koike, 2010) a Sci-Fi anime by Madhouse which premiered at Western film festivals such as Locarno. Although the anime followed a conventional apocalypse theme, the inclusion of cars was a deliberate targeting of North American male audiences. 'Afro Samurai' (Zizaki, 2009) was an example of a joint franchise arrangement between Samuel L. Jackson and Gonzo Studio. The anime was released as a television series, feature film, manga, Blu-ray and video game. The introduction of 'gijinka' to Western fansites have proved popular, where inanimate objects and concepts are given anime 'qualities' derived from character types ending in the suffix-TAN. This development aligns with Azuma's reading of otaku social behaviour. The licensing agreements increasingly target individual characters rather than the anime's story. The official sanction given to previously unlicensed download websites such as Crunchyroll.com has re-invigorated the anime market with studios also developing direct download services to compete against the pirate websites.

The return to hand drawn cels which Miyazaki announced for his anime, 'Gake no Ue no Ponyo' *Ponyo* (2008) reflected a growing nostalgia for previous anime. The erection of an eighteen metres high statue of a 1970s anime robot hero, 'Mobile Suit Gundam' in Odaiba Park, Tokyo in 2009 attracted 4 million visitors. Despite the attempts to develop external markets, the industry remains primarily targeted at a Japanese audience well versed in the subtleties of anime.

Chapter 5: Falling to Earth, Hayao Miyazaki (1941-)

'The creation of a single world comes from a huge number of fragments and chaos.'
(Miyazaki, 2008: 10)

Using the approach of Lamarre's relational framework for anime, this Chapter explores selected films directed by Hayao Miyazaki for evidence of an animation form closer to the cinematic tradition than orthodox cel animation. Understanding the paradox of anime creating output closer to live action cinema than full orthodox animation is a central aim for this study.

Whereas orthodox cel animation attempts to create reality effects through the scale, weight and balance of the drawings themselves, in conducting a detailed content analysis, I expect to identify a blending of differing genres, stronger narrative form and characterisation more consistent with the live cinematic tradition. This would support the premise for this study that anime represents a new approach to animation marked by the influences of Japanese culture on narrative form, characterisation, mise-en-scène, animation techniques, together with a significant creative influence from the director.

5.1 Defining the evidence

The key research areas for this study were described in Chapter 3, namely anime's reliance on Japanese cultural traditions and iconography, its modes of production and its creative inspiration driven by individual authorship. In examining these factors, I will refer to the framework outlined by Thomas Lamarre which he termed setting out the 'relational understanding' between 'cinema and anime, animation and anime, animation and cinema' (Lamarre, 2002:188). This framework enables anime to be considered beyond the

narrower perspective of a sub-genre of orthodox Hollywood animation. My premise is that anime represents a new 'animetic' approach which, as a form, frames Japanese anime as a distinctive element with cinematic tradition. This process is driven by cultural influences and animation techniques which are articulated through the visual style of individual directors. This Chapter examines the work of one of the most interesting and influential anime directors since the 1980s, Hayao Miyazaki (1941 -). The choice of Miyazaki enabled the analysis to critically assess the work of a director who includes frequent intertextual references in his films to other non-Japanese texts. However these inclusions also reflect an inter-medial quality where Miyazaki re-codes these other texts from the perspective of his own culture and upbringing. His status as an auteur, running his own studio, Studio Ghibli, and therefore not constrained by the requirements of the large studio system in the production of his animation, also raises interesting differences between the production of orthodox cel animation and anime. Mainly focused on the production of highly commercial feature films, Miyazaki is both a traditionalist (using established Japanese drawing techniques) and an innovator (moving anime beyond formulaic television series into the global film market). His ability to scale his animation without relying on movement for all his scenes is, I suggest, an interesting deviation from the norm of the animation genre which is worthy of further investigation. If anime does represent a new animation tradition, Miyazaki can therefore be described as one of its most influential figures.

5.2 Hayao Miyazaki's approach to animation

Hayao Miyazaki was born in Tokyo in 1941 when Japan was at war and his childhood was dominated by the enormous changes in Japanese society which resulted

from defeat in 1945. The subsequent American occupation forced Japan to adopt Western structures and attitudes wholesale. Resentment against the occupation until 1952 was one of the drivers for the burst of creative post-war film making which inspired directors such as Akira Kurosawa ('Rashomon', 1950) and Kenji Mizoguchi ('Ugetsu', 1953) to re-discover Japanese values and traditions. Despite a conventional middle-class upbringing, Miyazaki did not enter the family aircraft business (which gave him a love of airplanes). He attended the prestigious Gakushuin University in Tokyo and studied politics and economics. His interest in films began after viewing 'Hakujaden' *The Legend of the White Serpent*, the first anime colour film directed by Taiji Yabushita in 1958. Miyazaki became a manga artist and his professional interest soon led to the animation of the print manga. In 1963 he obtained a job as an animator at Toei Studio, one of the main studios in the Japanese film industry. This apprenticeship as an animator and director of animation provided Miyazaki with a detailed understanding of the production processes which underpin the creative imagination of his later output.

His career is interesting in that, from an early stage, he looked to European and American creative texts for inspiration. His early influences included French animation - particularly the work of Giraud (Moebius) and the author Antoine de Saint-Exupery (Odell & Le Blanc, 2009). The fantasy and science fiction writers Ursula K. Le Guin and Diana Wynne-Jones were also acknowledged as influences on his creative stories as well as historical novelists Philippa Pearce and Rosemary Sutcliff. The common thread with many of these authors is the creation of alternative fantasy worlds – well suited to traditional anime imagery and an area which I will develop later in the Chapter.

An early example of his adaptation of a Western novel was 'Arupusu no Shojo Haiji'

Heidi, Girl of the Alps (Miyazaki, 1974). Similarly 'Rupan Sansei' *Lupin III: Castle of Cagliostro* (Miyazaki, 1979) took its inspiration from Europe, in this case, French fin de siècle novels of the adventures of a gentleman thief written by Maurice Le Blanc. In a slightly bizarre combination, Lupin III a direct descendant of Lupin, and his accomplice Goemon Ishikawa, a direct descendant of a famous Japanese Samurai, rescue Princess Clarisse and have various confrontations with the villain, Count de Cagliostro and Lupin's on/off girlfriend, Fujiko Mine.

However, despite the non-Japanese settings and characters, Miyazaki created a distinct Japanese style in the anime whilst also paying homage to the original French work. For example, Lupin is an ambiguous hero whose girlfriend is similarly constantly moving between the role of heroine and villain. The decision to take his inspiration from non-Japanese texts is an interesting reflection on his stated despair of the apocalyptic tone of post-war manga and anime. Even Tezuka's famous manga, 'Tetsuwan Atomu' (*Astro Boy*), first published in 1952, was considered to be tragic by Miyazaki (Miyazaki, 2009). For a child brought up in post-war Japan, the attraction of creating other worlds for his stories is perhaps understandable.

Miyazaki's subversion of traditional Japanese story elements with non-Japanese plot mechanisms represents a fusion of cultural identity which reaches beyond the normal orthodox expectations of the animation genre. According to his business partner Isao Takahata, Miyazaki's works 'have emphasised the depiction of a revelatory and symbolic world structure in a concrete and realistic way, and they have become increasingly elaborate and precise in nature' (Takahata in Miyazaki, 2009: 459).

5.3 The establishment of Studio Ghibli

In 1968 Miyazaki first worked with his current business partner, Isao Takahata. They established Studio Ghibli in 1985 to specifically make feature films which would take anime beyond the more formulaic television series. Although stylistically they are two very different directors, their films have made Studio Ghibli the most financially successful animation studio outside Hollywood, consistently winning awards at major film festivals.

Miyazaki's socialist views have influenced the management structure of Studio Ghibli. Traditionally animators in Japan are badly paid and work long hours. Women animators in particular have not enjoyed equality of pay and opportunities. Staff facilities at the studio are comfortable and extensive with luxurious women's toilets, a roof garden and relaxation space. Miyazaki actively encourages the careers of young animators, providing opportunities to develop creative ideas in the style of an atelier, although his films ultimately are extremely personal statements of his own world view.

Following a distribution deal with Disney in 1995, his films are now widely distributed beyond Japan, although usually in amended and dubbed versions. The increasingly secure financial basis for Studio Ghibli in the late 1990s and after 2000 has enabled Miyazaki to produce very personalised films fulfilling the original basis for establishing his company. Miyazaki commands considerable respect within the animation industry and by its audiences. The first Hollywood Oscar for an animated film was won by his film 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' *Spirited Away* in 2002. John Lassiter, one of the pioneers of computer aided animation as head of Pixar, has expressed his admiration for Miyazaki's achievement at Studio Ghibli. He has frequently acknowledged Miyazaki's influence on the development of Hollywood animation since the mid-1990s (Lasseter in

Miyazaki, 1996: 9). The emotional depth demonstrated in '*Toy Story 2*' (Lasseter, 1999), for example, he attributed to Miyazaki's influence.

5.4 The nature of Miyazaki's auteurship

For such an influential anime director, Miyazaki describes himself foremost as a film director, the medium in which expresses his creative ideas does not limit his ambition (Miyazaki, 2009). His animation is therefore an expression of the Japanese cinematic tradition. Yet outside Japan, anime is perceived as a minor player in the global film market. This needs to be acknowledged in the critical analysis for this study as any external assessment of anime may be constrained by an existing assumption that anime films only relates to the genre animation rather than to a broader film tradition.

If, according to Miyazaki, the medium is irrelevant to his filmic interpretations, where does anime appear in the hierarchy of film genre? Is the physical medium still an important consideration despite Miyazaki's declaration (Miyazaki, 2009) that his work should be categorised as 'eiga' or films not 'anime' or animation? For Miyazaki, his medium enables him to create alternative realities to which spectators can retreat, particularly when the pressures of a tightly regulated Japanese society threaten to overwhelm. In his alternative worlds, Miyazaki is able to display auteurship in a way which would be difficult within the constrained and more regimented regime of television anime where popular characters are not allowed to disappear if the audience reaction is likely to be unfavourable. He however accepts that the hyper-realist expectations of the spectator requires a certain logic to be maintained and his anime is generally non-reflexive in this regard.

Miyazaki describes his approach to animation as 'observation' (Miyazaki, 2009: 41).

Unlike orthodox animation where the story requires a series of clever ideas to hold the audience's attention, his films focus on the characters' motivation and reaction to events. In a typical Hollywood cartoon film, for example, it is sufficient for two characters to fight and for the rationale to be obvious, Popeye and Bluto fight over Olive Oyl, and the animators find new contexts for the same theme. The audience frames the text as cartoon comedy and looks for the visual jokes which confirm their codification. Miyazaki is more interested in portraying characterisation and ensuring that characters remain true to their allotted roles in the developing narrative. His characters interact with their situation and display an appropriate emotional response. In alternative worlds, as in the real world, there is often no resolution to a particular story or situation, the characters do the best they can. As was noted in Chapter 4, from an anthropological perspective, doing one's best as a hero or heroine is reflective of cultural norms in Japanese society.

Anime films are increasingly complex to plan and produce. The production process for cel animation has adopted digital processes such as CGI to address the many thousands of frames which are required even for limited animation techniques. Miyazaki continues to follow his preferred process, which is to develop the narrative and characterisation through hand drawn story boards with no script. Even with some CGI, for the film 'Mononoke Hime' *Princess Mononoke* (1997), he personally checked two thirds of the one hundred and forty thousand drawings needed for the film. His distrust of technology as a barrier to original creativity is mirrored in some of his themes where the misuse of technology leads to dystopian structures.

5.5 The evidence from selected works

This Chapter analyses five films directed by Miyazaki from the Studio Ghibli period between 1986 and 2001 from the perspective of animation techniques and direction, content and form (including inter-mediality expressed as transformation and convergence as outlined by Spielman, 2001). A focus is given to the concept of de-assurance in Miyazaki's films as opposed to traditional Hollywood genres which reflect the cinema of reassurance i.e. where the expected happens – a resolution of conflicts and secure contexts for the audience. Miyazaki's narratives are complicated and often based on philosophical or moral dilemmas. Where there is resolution, it is often enigmatic and open-ended. Fear is a constant context – fear for the future of the natural environment, the misuse of technology, the apocalypse. Does Miyazaki's work strike a chord with audiences who can equate the uncertainty of the film contexts to the uncertainty of their own lives in a shifting global society? Japanese audiences' uncertainty regarding the future, is perhaps understandable in a nation which has suffered so much from war, famine and natural disasters in the last hundred years. Yet Miyazaki also speaks of the joy of observing ordinary life in his films – a sense of 'nihonjinron', reflecting the long tradition of visual culture. This sense of detailed observation of everyday life is reminiscent of the cinematic films of Yasujiro Ozu in post-war Japan. The resulting films provide a rich source of information on the development of anime as distinct from orthodox cel animation through the experience of one of its most thoughtful creators.

5.5.1 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' *Laputa: Castle in the Sky*, 1986

Miyazaki directed 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' *Laputa: Castle in the Sky* in 1986 as the first film for his own studio, Studio Ghibli. This work formed the initial attempt by Miyazaki to develop his own creative output away from the demands of the traditional animation studio system with its emphasis on quantity and repetition. A complex film, 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' can be interpreted through the use of intertextuality where Western cultural conventions influence the complicated mix of genres, characterisation, narrative and animation techniques. The interpretation I suggest however, also represents an element of inter-mediality (Hutcheon, 2006), Miyazaki re-codifies Western conventions into a new trans-cultural form which exemplifies a Japanese post-modern interpretation of technological change.

The complexity provides opportunities to explore the extent to which anime can be defined as a new form of animation, focusing on the influences of indigenous cultural conventions (including those local conventions which are subverted by references to other cultures), the influence of technology on the process and content of films, and the distinctive directorial cues which mark the film as the work of an individual not a studio production line.

5.5.1.1 Content analysis

The narrative is developed in an alternative world where Pazu, a young boy in a remote mining village catches a girl, Sheeta, who literally falls from the sky. Sheeta has a magical pendant which enables her to float in the air. She is being chased by two different groups, the pirates led by the old woman, Dola, who want the pendant for its financial

worth, and a group of men in dark glasses led by Muska who want the pendant for its power to defeat their enemies. Pazu has his own agenda, he desperately wants to prove that his father once saw the mythical flying island of Laputa. The narrative follows the chasing groups as Pazu and Sheeta reach Laputa, are separated and ultimately have to ally with the pirates to defeat Muska through destroying Laputa.

The mixture of genres - science fiction, adventure story and fantasy enabled Miyazaki to explore his main theme of the dangers of technology subverting the natural world. A theme which was very current in Japan in the 1980s when advanced technology drove the Japanese economic boom and the subsequent 'Baburu Keiki' or bubble economy. Japanese manufacturing by the 1980s was the basis for continuing economic growth. However by 1991, the Japanese economy had greatly inflated assets which drove excessive speculation. The value of stock and land grew far beyond their actual worth. The stock market crash in 1991 profoundly affected not only the national economy but also Japanese people's confidence in their government and the perceived greed of Japanese banks and large industrial conglomerates.

In this sense, the film was also concerned with the search for utopia where humans live in harmony with the natural world, and use the power of natural forces such as the wind to progress. The entire film was animated to emphasise the freedom obtained from flying and floating – an interesting element both from the perspective of the animation techniques used to create this illusion and the personal obsession of the director with flying as a metaphor for freedom from the highly conformist Japanese society (also referenced in his film 'Kurenai no Buta').

With regard to cultural identity, Miyazaki's film represented a very personal use of

Japanese aesthetics and associated iconography to portray the struggle between strength and passivity, freedom and domination, internalised within the characters and externalised in the story. Even though the film follows his individual preference for an open-ended, unstable resolution to the narrative, it demonstrated a world with an internal logic. The main colours used in the film, white, green red and black represented those traditionally used in Japanese aesthetics. How does this apparent conformity with his own cultural norms relate to his enthusiastic borrowing of Western texts for the landscapes of the film? Is this, in effect, a re-telling of an existing story?

The main inter-textual element represented in the film was Miyazaki's use of the eighteenth century Anglo-Irish satirist, Jonathan Swift's flying island, Laputa (see Figure 23), discovered by Gulliver in the novel, *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). Swift's Laputa is populated by artists and scientists who are unable to use their scientific knowledge for practical effect. It was a satire on the Royal Society of Swift's time, obsessed with experimentation rather than progress. Miyazaki borrowed Swift's fundamental dissatisfaction with a blind faith in science and re-imaged this viewpoint as a fear of the indiscriminate use of technology. The reference is reflexive – Pazu refers to Swift's Laputa and dismisses it as 'made up'.



Figure 23: Gulliver discovers Laputa

The intertextual reference to Swift is interesting as it also demonstrates elements of trans-cultural phenomenon or transmediality (Hutcheon, 2006) where Swift's narrative has been transcoded to a different set of conventions. Miyazaki took Swift's satire and illustrated a very Japanese debate on the framing of technology and the environment, what has been referred to as the relationship between the techno-sphere and the biosphere (Lioi, 2006). There are other instances of intertextuality in the film, Miyazaki borrowed the name of the main female character, Sheeta from Sita, a heroine in the great Hindu epic 'Ramayana' who is represented both as an earth deity and a goddess of feminine virtue. This choice raises interesting issues of Miyazaki's characterisation of Sheeta to reinforce his main theme of using technology wisely which will be developed under 5.5.1.3.

5.5.1.2 Cultural factors

In its mixture of genres, 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' moves from an historical epic, to fantasy to science fiction. The use of Western-style nineteenth century clothes, technology (Morse code, telegraphy) and power (windmills, ploughs) provides Miyazaki with the contrast between a world which respects the natural environment in its society and culture, and the robotic technology sought by Muska to revive Laputa as a war machine. He adopts a hermeneutic style of narrative which moves between past and future to resolve the problems of the present. The conventional melodramatic cinematic metaphor of a storm and an enormous ruined castle where Sheeta and Pazu fight Muska is balanced by the unconventional scene of large military robots now working as gardeners and nurturing the local animals, Laputa's warlike civilisation had collapsed seven hundred years previously (a possible allegorical reference to the decline of the Meiji period in Japan in 1912). Miyazaki utilised a common theme in anime that of a post-apocalyptic society destroyed by technology. Sheeta and Pazu's struggles against forces beyond their control reflect the epic nature of the story.

The fantasy genre is represented by the magic pendant with the power of levitation. Even this common motif is subverted by Miyazaki to represent a struggle on several levels. The pirates seek the pendant to gain wealth, Muska and his followers to take over the world and gain power and Sheeta to float in the sky. The contrast between its passive use by Sheeta and the aggressive use by Muska is a warning to those who misuse technology for their own ends. Sheeta achieves freedom as she learns to float and glide. Muska is also an heir to Laputa but uses his power to awaken the enormous military robots which fall from Laputa and destroy the countryside. Sheeta realises for the first time that the

stone is destructive not the source of freedom. When Sheeta is captured by Muska on Laputa, Pazu has to join the pirates to free her. Pazu is determined to reach Sheeta even though he has to climb up through the roots of the giant tree which supports the island. Ultimately Sheeta and Pazu realise that Laputa must be destroyed to prevent the pirates and Muska from taking the stone. As they recite the magic words, knowing that they both could be destroyed, the giant tree ascends upwards with the crystal stone in its roots.

Mecha anime explores the relationship between technology and humans and 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' includes elements of this sub-genre. In the absence of people, the military robots of Laputa have reverted to looking after the abandoned gardens. It is only when people return to the island that they are activated to destroy. The lesson Miyazaki attempts to give is that technology of itself is not destructive but people such as Muska place too much faith in progress and technology. Sheeta finds a natural use for the stone which complements the power of the wind, yet the stone is also a crystal, a substance which can be mined by the miners in the valley.

In the initial film titles, Miyazaki represents the wind as a woman blowing life into the world. Pazu becomes enthralled by his ride in the pirate's flapster but ultimately the flying stones and the flying ships represent the domination of technology. There is also an interesting allusion which can be drawn between the need of anime itself for technology in its production and Miyazaki's search for simplicity drawn from traditional Japanese conventions. Limited animation makes more efficient use of scarce resources and embraces limited impact technology. This approach exemplifies Miyazaki's world view which he embeds in his animated films and which does not fit neatly into Wells' thoughtful separation of films into orthodox, experimental and developmental animation (Wells,

1998).

If 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' represents a case for anime as a new approach to animation, influenced directly by the director, are there also innovative elements in Miyazaki's characterisation and narrative? His treatment of Sheeta as passive even when in possession of the powerful flying stone, then captured and passed to different groups chasing the power of the pendant, suggests a conventional role, familiar in Japanese characterisation. In contrast Pazu has all the action roles. He is continually climbing upwards, rescuing Sheeta, and seeking Laputa. He, not Sheeta pilots the glider to Laputa. Pazu is therefore the conventional all action hero who is driven by his memories of his father. Yet Miyazaki achieves an unconventional balance where Sheeta's passive feminine strength (the wind which animates life) is countered by Pazu's actions (the mechanical technology which harnesses the wind). Nature and technology are in harmony and the girl and the boy contribute equally.

The characterisation of Mama Dola the leader of the pirates is also an interesting example of Miyazaki's subversion of convention. Dola is portrayed as an old hag but holds a position of authority in a ruthless gang. The traditional Japanese respect for old age is given a contemporary interpretation in a vigorous old woman who does not need anyone's help.

At the end of the film, the director demonstrates his individualism (and claim to be regarded as an auteur) in refusing to provide resolution to the story for the viewer. The end of the film is an enigma. In this aspect, both conventional orthodox animation and the cinematic tradition in its various genres prefer resolution. Miyazaki is consistent throughout his film making in maintaining the logic of his alternative worlds where conclusions would

be an artificial mechanism, designed only to placate the viewer. He prefers to leave the viewer to provide their own resolution rather than influence the relationship between the viewer and the fantasy he has persuaded them to observe.

5.5.1.3 Animation techniques

The visual design of 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' was used by Miyazaki to reinforce a very personal fusion of Western and Eastern aesthetics. The castle was modelled on Caerphilly Castle, a notable example of mediaeval Western architecture. The village was designed as a stereotypical Welsh mining village (which may have been based on villages around Pontypridd in south Wales). This was Miyazaki's homage to the striking Welsh miners whom he greatly admired on a visit to Wales in 1984. Miyazaki returned to Wales in 1986 to research the film, by which time the strikers had lost their fight to save their industry (Odell & Le Blanc, 2009). In an interview with the Guardian newspaper Miyazaki explained, 'Many people of my generation see the miners as a symbol, a dying breed of fighting men. Now they are gone' (Guardian, 14 September 2005). The miners represented the honest side of the exploitation of the natural environment. Miyazaki explained the influence of his Welsh visits thus,

'I was in Wales just after the miner's strike. I really admired the way the miners' unions fought to the very end for their jobs and their communities and I wanted to reflect the strength of those communities in my film. It made a strong impression on me, a whole industry with no work. (Miyazaki in McCarthy, 2003:98)

The village in 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' is animated in a Lowry-esque way in the establishing shots with figures working in the landscape. Pazu's character was portrayed as an active, hard-working and loyal friend to Sheeta. Miyazaki placed the mining village

solidly on the ground in contrast to the action which mainly took place in the air. In Miyazaki's visual metaphor the miners were one with the earth which they also relied on for their existence. This contrasted with the fantasy taking place above them.

In Laputa's world, the flying machines dominated the action. Individually designed by Miyazaki in Victorian 'steampunk' design, the large airship, the pirates' wreck of an airship and the tiny 'flaptors' which enable Pazu to achieve his dream to fly to Laputa, represented both the fantastical and the mechanical. This was Miyazaki trying to balance the freedom of flying with the need for humans to use mechanical means to achieve it.

The individual mixture of Western and Eastern elements demonstrated Miyazaki's auteurship in relation to his work, but does it also undermine any arguments for codifying anime as a new animation tradition, based on indigenous Japanese elements? If Miyazaki was demonstrating that trans-mediality identified his work as being reliant on global influences, how is it different from other animation traditions? The answer may lie in the use made by Miyazaki of animation techniques in the film.

Miyazaki is a very experienced animator who worked for many years on other directors' films in Studio Toei. The need to produce large quantities of animated cel drawings to deliver weekly episodes directly influenced the appearance of anime. It breaks the convention established by early animators. As Raeffelli observed, 'the Japanese style does not respect the rules dictated by the master, Norman McLaren, according to whom one must not move the drawing but draw the movement (Raeffelli, 1997:127). Norman McLaren (1914-1987) was an influential and innovative animator who developed several techniques used by contemporary animation, including pixilation where actors move in front of the animation camera instead of drawings.

Limited movement drawings constrain the way which the film is able to progress the narrative. If the drawing movements do not detail the character's movement, the result is usually reflexive with the viewer aware of the jerky and stiff result. Miyazaki used a typically Japanese approach to illustrate live action with limited animation. With the camera showing 24 frames per second, the anime was prepared using 12 frames per second to avoid jerkiness to the viewer. The drawing frequently shows close ups of faces, emphasising emotion with panning and framing in and out compensating for the lack of detailed drawings.

The physical techniques of animation represent an important measure of whether anime as a cinematic form represents a new direction for animation. 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' was a film which demonstrated the influence of Takeshi Murakami's Superflat style. Miyazaki's use of two-dimensional space was represented by his trademark use of flying and gliding but here the importance of space and distance actively underpins the style of animation as 'animetic' (using Lamarre's definition). A multi-layer technique reduced the slippage from the front and back of the image and encouraged the viewer to experience a sensation of weightlessness (see Figure 24).



Figure 24: Miyazaki's use of layered imaging

As the film begins, the viewer is immediately immersed in the flight of a large airship through a bank of clouds which is viewed from above by a pirate airship. A girl, Sheeta, sits in the large airship looking out as the pirates' attack. She is looked after by men in dark glasses. When the pirates attack, Sheeta knocks out her guard, grabs a pendant from him and jumps out of the airship. The spectator follows Sheeta as she falls downwards through the clouds. Visual cues help to provide a feeling of depth – the city lights far below, Sheeta becomes fainter, but Miyazaki used few of the usual conventions to create depth e.g. a darker background to the figure. Miyazaki preferred the use of weightlessness, flying, gliding to give a sense of movement, with little change to the drawing – Sheeta was drawn in a single position as she floats to the earth (see Figure 25). The simple drawing suggested a feeling of 'other worldliness' which defied gravity (Kline, 2000). This drawing style was also, I suggest, appropriate for the motif of Sheeta and Pazu's spirit quest to find the flying castle.



Figure 25: Miyazaki's adoption of floating

In the initial scenes, Miyazaki maintained the orientation down, from the pirate ship viewing the airship, from Sheeta falling down to earth to Pazu's cabin on the hill to the miners' village in the valley to the mine tunnels. In the film, escape was always vertical, up and down, with action occurring on the horizontal plane in circular movements. It is interesting to note Miyazaki's use of limited animation to encourage the view as fantasy whereas animation as a genre is moving in the other direction to reinforce proper skeletal movement in the animation of the characters (for example, stop-motion animation techniques). This tendency to introduce reality effects, for example through simulating the effect of gravity, has also been adopted by video game developers (Zardonella, 1999).

The colour palette for the film used a few strong, intense colours, and with the lighting, provided Miyazaki with the means to emphasise aspects of the animation. For example, the director used blue to depict night time and poorly lit scenes. The skin tone of the character remains pale rather than appearing darker as would be the case in a photo-realistic approach. In the scene in a cave where Sheeta activates the crystal, the lighting washes out the colour around the glowing crystal to emphasise its intensity (see Figure 26).



Figure 26: Miyazaki's use of colour and lighting to heighten animation effects

Similar care was taken with the use of colour and lighting for the depiction of the pirates – using warm analogous colours for their clothes and flying machines against the blue sky background. In a scene on the pirate ship, Sheeta is drawn wearing a beige nightdress before she enters the pirate leader Mama Dola's bedroom. When she leaves the bedroom, her nightdress is the same colour as the pirates' clothes, reinforcing her association with the pirates. This device is also adopted for the colour of Mama Dola's distinctive pink plaits (see Figure 27).



Figure 27: Miyazaki's use of colour to reinforce the story effects

Unlike the usual effect in animation, Miyazaki's animated scenes give equal importance to those containing narrative and those expressing movement, an area I will explore further in the analysis of the film, 'Tonari no Totoro' (Miyazaki, 1988).

5.5.2 'Tonari no Totoro' *My Neighbor Totoro* 1988

'Tonari no Totoro' is a work in the anime elegiac tradition (Napier, 2001) which was a considerable commercial and popular success for Studio Ghibli. It provides opportunities to examine an anime film which explores a more conventional animation theme, that of childhood and imaginary friends. The transmedial effects included a marketing campaign which has made Totoro a familiar childhood toy across the globe. The narrative has no conflict or threat but instead is a re-affirmation of childhood innocence and enquiry. The two young girls, Satsuki and Mei delight in their new friends, living in a rural idyll in 1950s Japan.

In transmedial terms, despite its eventual success, Miyazaki struggled to secure funding to make 'Tonari no Totoro'. During the early days of Studio Ghibli he was still reliant on external funding to produce the films. The pitch of two children and a monster in contemporary rural Japan did not strike backers as being in the mainstream of commercial anime. It was eventually conceived as a double bill with Isao Takahata's harrowing story of two children in post-war Japan, 'Hotaru no Haka' *Grave of the Fireflies* (1988). The concept of two films aimed at very different audiences appearing together as a three hour double bill today appears bizarre and Takahata's film initially received most of the attention.

Following modest success at the box office in Japan, it slowly grew to become an iconic film for Studio Ghibli. Totoro is now as well known and loved in Japan as another woodland fictional character, Winnie the Pooh. Its global success was driven by a demand for merchandise in America, particularly for Totoros. An offer of a free Totoro with the video

of the film was considerably oversubscribed in 1990. The American release was not without its difficulties as the distributors wanted two scenes removed – particularly the scene where the father takes a bath with Mei, a normal occurrence in Japanese society. Miyazaki was adamant that the film be released in its entirety and he rejected requests to revise the Japanese version. The effect on the national consciousness in Japan was also seen in the re-construction of the Kusakabe's house at the 2005 Japan Global Expo. The old fashioned features struck a chord with a generation more used to homes powered by advanced technology.

5.5.2.1 Content analysis

Although Miyazaki himself refuted the suggestion that the film is autobiographical, the story of two children moving to the country near Tokyo to be near their ill mother in hospital, mirrored his own childhood experience. He lives in the same area, the Sayama hills, now and a suburb of Tokyo but which retains some of the ancient forest where the Totoros live in the film. As a result of the film's success, a remnant of the Sayama forest has been preserved by the Totoro no Futusato Foundation as the 'Homeland of Totoro', a charity which Miyazaki supports. He himself referred to the film as 'where my consciousness begins, it explains how my mind works' (Miyazaki in McCarthy, 2003: 14).

This tone of nostalgic remembrance for past memories is reinforced by the visual design of the scenes. Unlike the usual stylistic 'animetic' drawings of the characters as 'nihonjin banare' (Sato, 2006) or non-representative of Japanese culture, the characters in 'Tonari no Totoro' are clearly Japanese in origin. Miyazaki (2009) referred to the discussion in the production of the film about how the colouring could accurately reproduce the tones

of the earth of the area. The work has a clear spatial and historical grounding yet, as with 'Kurenai no Buta' (1992), the fantastical world lives comfortably side by side with the depiction of the 'real' world.

The plot device is that of the move to the country with the two children exploring new environments and new friends. The children are excited to see their new house which is surrounded by gardens and a forest. They meet the caretaker, Nanny, and as they explore the empty dark house, the children discover the 'susuwatari' or soot spirits which disappear into dark spaces when disturbed. The family meet the local neighbours and next day set out for the hospital to see their mother. While Satsuki goes to school, the forest spirit, Little Totoro, is discovered in the garden by Mei who chases after it into a large camphor tree where the other Totoros live, including the huge king, O-Totoro. She is excited by her visit although she cannot find the tunnel to return. The family formally bow to the forest spirits in the camphor tree for looking after Mei. As the family sleep, the Totoros sit on the top of the camphor tree, making music.

When it starts raining the next evening, the children go to the bus stop with an umbrella for their father. O-Totoro arrives as they wait in the dark and they politely lend him an umbrella. He appears delighted to hear the rain on the umbrella. The children are astonished to see a twelve-legged Nekobasu 'Catbus' (see Figure 28) arrive which gives a lift to O-Totoro after handing the children a parcel of seeds. One night the children are awoken by the Totoros dancing around the seeds. An enormous camphor tree grows and O-Totoro gives the children a magical ride. Mei becomes worried about her mother and sets out for the hospital. Satsuki is worried as Mei is missing. She finds the Totoros who take her to Mei in the Nekobasu. They get a ride to the hospital where Mei can see that her

mother is fine. When they get home, the Totoros sit on the roof. The children will not see them again as their mother is coming home for good and their immediate worries are gone.



Figure 28: Production drawing of the Nekobasu

The narrative is told from the point of view of the children, particularly four year old

Mei, and the pace of the film mimics her interest in her new world. For Mei, the important things are exploration of her new world, the security of her family and friends and the small actions of everyday life, cleaning the house, bathing with her family, helping Nanny in the garden. Her acceptance of the existence of the forest spirits is part of her acceptance of life. Miyazaki is consistent with his message of the importance of harmony between people and the natural world.

The film discovers the forest spirits slowly, first the *susuwatari* which disappear when people are about, then the Little Totoros which Mei initially only sees as two white ears moving through the grass. The scene of the discovery of O-Totoro lying sleeping on its back invites the viewer to share Mei's astonishment. The scene only shows his enormous stomach which Mei struggles to climb. She sinks into his fur and he wakes up roaring showing his wide mouth full of teeth. This glimpse of O-Totoro's strength and temper reminds the viewer that O-Totoro is a wild spirit, yet Mei sees only its strength and goodness – this is a spirit which will protect her.

Visually, the *mise-en-scène* is meticulous in the quality of the drawing and colouring. The film relies on quiet observation rather than dramatic interventions to move the narrative forward which, I suggest, deviates from the genre-specific definition of orthodox animation. In her mother's absence, Satsuki is growing up quickly as her father relies on her to look after Mei. She is more cautious than her sister. Where Mei leaps onto O-Totoro's stomach, Satsuki is reluctant to take O-Totoro's paw for a wild spinning ride. She realises that she needs to think as an adult. Yet one of the strongest themes of the film is the importance of family and unconditional love. The children's two feminine role models, their mother and Nanny are loving and strong. Their father spends time with them

and listens to their stories of the forest spirits with respect. This support enables the children to meet the worry of their mother's illness and the angst of settling down in a new community. Kanta, Nanny's grandson initially treats the children with suspicion but when Satsuki and Mei shelter from the rain in a roadside shrine, he gives them his umbrella and runs home to be told off by his mother for its loss. This is mirrored by Satsuki giving O-Totoro her umbrella at the bus stop. Respect and good manners exist between people and spirits. The spirits are not anthropomorphic and are not given human characteristics by Miyazaki, unlike orthodox animation such as Disney's character, Mickey Mouse. The spirits demonstrate universal behaviour shared by both people and spirits which is one of mutual respect, that of 'magokoro' (pure heart) not a dominant relationship. It is therefore unsurprising that since the film's release, children have related to the film on a global basis.

5.5.2.2 Cultural factors

The film includes an interesting combination of nostalgia for childhood experiences alongside the creation of an alternative world view where there is peaceful co-existence of the humans and the forest spirits. Miyazaki is reminding his audience of Japan's long history of respecting the natural world – the sub-text being that in the modern world the misuse of technology has destroyed this balance. Prof Kusakabe reminds his children that the giant camphor tree where the Totoros live is old and from a time when trees and people were friends. This respect is reflected in the national religion, Shinto, and in Buddhist teaching. The animistic spirits of the Shinto religion, the 'kami', behave in a similar way to the Totoros. In the film, the family are very respectful of the forest spirits,

thanking them for their care of Mei. When Mei is lost on her way to see her mother, she rests under the shadow of a Buddhist figure to protect children. The children treat the Totoros respectfully – Satsuki gives her spare umbrella to O-Totoro at the bus stop when she realises that he has no protection against the rain. As a result, the spirits help them when Mei is lost, watching over the family.

However Miyazaki is well known for his Marxist views and has denied that the Totoros have a religious meaning (McCarthy, 2002). I am cautious of ascribing Shintoist views to Miyazaki, particularly in light of his own denials. His intertextual references indicate that he subscribes to a world view in cultural terms. In this interpretation, I disagree with Wright (2005) who argued that Miyazaki practises an intrinsically Shinto philosophy through his films. I suggest that Miyazaki appears to be seeking a balance between competing forces, movement and stillness, nature and technology, local and global and that these competing elements drive his creative work beyond what is required from orthodox animation.

The dominant visual character in the film is O-Totoro or the king of the Totoros. Miyazaki appears to have taken his inspiration from two animals well known in Japanese folk lore, the tanuki and the owl. Tanuki (raccoon) are considered to have magic powers and to be mischievous. The owl is also considered to be magical. Totoro's wide smile and tendency to disappear provides intertextual links to the Cheshire Cat in Lewis Carroll's book, 'Alice's Adventures in Wonderland' (1865), as does Mei's chase after the Little Totoro and her subsequent fall down the tunnel into the magic camphor tree. The memorable Nekobasu which takes Satsuki and Mei to see their mother in hospital provides the children with an exciting ride flying across the countryside. A typical Miyazaki reference to

the freedom obtained from flying.

The categorisation of 'Tonari no Totoro' reveals some ambiguity. On the one hand, an animation with a geographical and temporal context, post-war Japan, and on the other hand what Philip Wegner (2010) has described as a sub-genre of science fiction, that of alternative history. Wegner drew on Todorov's (1973) codification of the 'fantastic' (i.e. where the viewer is unsure of the status of the action) and the 'fabulous' where the interaction with the alternative is proven. When Mrs Kusakabe finds the ear of corn left by Mei on her window sill in the hospital, the genre, using Todorov's classification, becomes fabulous, there is evidence that the nekobasu actually did take Satsuki and Mei for a ride rather than they imagined the experience. For Wegner, the film represents an idealised depiction of traditional Japanese concepts for the blurring of nature and human behaviours. This is an interesting perspective and I suggest that this approach can be taken further as an analogy for Miyazaki's search for balance, both in the animation process itself (the balance achieved between limited and full animation, movement and stillness, dialogue and natural sounds) and in the relationship between people and nature, a common theme for his films. As such, 'Tonari no Totoro' moves beyond orthodox cel animation where balance is generally restricted to achieving scale through movement and size.

5.5.2.3 Animation techniques

Miyazaki used his animation technique to give the viewer all the information about the forest spirits as the children do not speak their language and the scenes with the spirits subsequently have no dialogue. This represented a different approach to orthodox

animation which generally provides the non-human characters with speaking parts. One of the best remembered scenes in the film, where the children and O-Totoro wait at the bus stop, contains no dialogue, only the sound of the rain on the umbrella (see Figure 29). The restrained movement and lack of dialogue mark the film as untypical of orthodox cel animation where drawing exists to display movement and where dialogue fills in the gaps in the viewer's understanding.

The soundtrack also demonstrates this balance. Joe Hisaishi's score complements the movement of the characters but also balances the music with the sounds of nature – the noise of crickets, the rain, the rustling in the attic. O-Totoro's roar bends the trees and rattles the stones. This stillness is reinforced by the next scene, when the Nekobasu speeds in out of the darkness, all lights and movement, to take O-Totoro home.



Figure 29: Stillness as Satsuki and O-Totoro wait for the bus



Figure 30: Movement as O-Totoro takes Satsuki and Mei for a ride



Figure 31: Miyazaki's original drawing of Satsuki at the bus stop

5.5.3 'Kurenai no Buta' *Porco Rosso* 1992

In 'Kurenai no Buta', Miyazaki returns to his obsession with flying but in a very different context to 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' (1986). Although released in Japan in 1992,

the film was not widely available beyond Japan until the DVD release in 2005. It represents an interesting case study, particularly in the personal direction by the director of many of the work's creative elements. Miyazaki demonstrated his ability to move beyond the conventional form of animation based on audience expectations of orthodox Hollywood animation, displaying a sense of cinematic auteurship through his complex characterisation and deft mixing of genres.

5.5.3.1 Content analysis

'Kurenai no Buta' breaks with convention in being aimed at an adult audience. The work continued Miyazaki's use of a variety of devices, from constructing the *mise-en-scène* using photo-reality to placing the alternative world side by side with a known historical period. Miyazaki's direction blended a visual representation based on traditional Japanese aesthetics with a narrative derived from a serious and moral theme. Originally intended to be a comic commentary, the film developed a new direction following the start of civil war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

Miyazaki adopted a reflective tone for the narrative set in Italy in the 1930s, where a man, Marco, looks back on his life and withdraws from an increasingly Fascist society. The film contrasts Marco's refusal to actively participate in life with the enthusiasm of the young girl mechanic, Fio, who drags Marco back from self-pity and guilt.

In one scene Marco sits in a darkened room, lit by a candle, and confesses to Fio that he failed his fellow pilots during the war because he was the only survivor of a battle. He did not deserve to live – there were far better men than he who died, including his best friend, the husband of Gina, a night club owner. He saw the planes all spiral upwards in line but he was unable to join them and was pushed downwards back to the living world.

The animation creates another worldly feel, helped by the effect of the limited animation technique where the camera pans across the screen as the planes become smaller and smaller as they ascend. As Marco confesses, Fio's faith in him gives him back his feeling of self-worth which Miyazaki illustrates as Marco briefly turning back into a man.

This focus on characterisation and the importance of emotional tension is typical of Miyazaki's approach to animation and provides further evidence of anime's deviation from the expectations of orthodox cel animation.

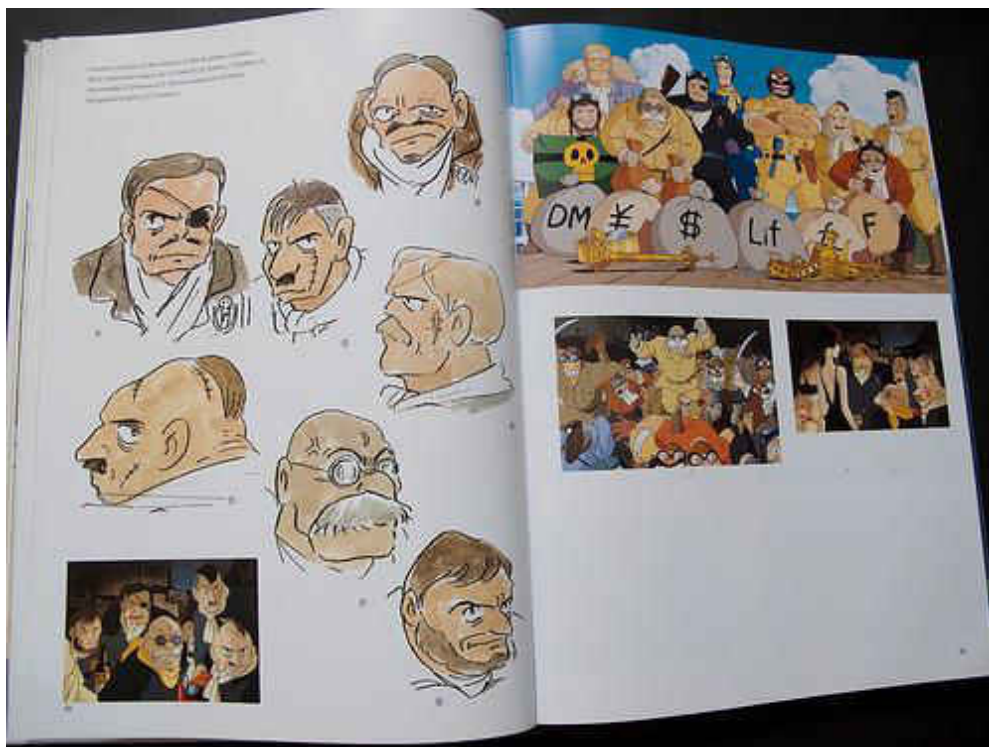


Figure 32: Miyazaki's original drawings of the individual pirates

The inclusion of comic scenes provides an opportunity to relate their treatment by Miyazaki to those of mainstream animation. The pirates who Marco duels with as a bounty hunter over the Adriatic are portrayed comically as a contrast to the romantic melodrama of Marco's story (see Figure 32). Their leader, Mamma Aiuto, is on occasion dressed as a circus clown with a large flower in his lapel, bow tie, striped trousers and a pilot's leather

cap and goggles (see Figure 33). In the initial scenes, the pirates' (and Marco's) collective inability to control the situation and deal with a group of giggling schoolgirls, dressed in typical Japanese school uniform of sailor suits, adds a tone of straightforward slapstick (see Figure 34).



Figure 33: Comic signifiers for the pirate leader, Mamma Aiuto

These scenes acknowledge the legacy of orthodox cel animation in both their composition (innocence overcomes villainy) and their execution (rapid action throughout the scenes). Yet these scenes also demonstrate a particular Japanese perspective as sailor-suited schoolgirls are a common motif in anime (for example the antics of the highly popular 'Bishojo Senshi Sera Mun', popularised in America as 'Sailor Moon'). Miyazaki also utilised these scenes to emphasis the reflective scenes which follow the comic scenes. This juxta positioning is not the sequence which viewers of orthodox animation would expect, and provides Miyazaki with opportunities to reinforce Marco as a world weary middle-aged man/pig.



Figure 34: Comic interlude as Marco rescues the schoolgirls

Miyazaki introduced a further innovation in his depiction of the story in 1930s Italy. Clearly this is a long way from Japan or one of the alternative worlds which provide the context for his other films. Marco flies his beloved red plane, a very similar model to the actual 1920s Caproni C-221, as a bounty hunter in the Adriatic after the First World War. It was probably the coast of Croatia which gave Miyazaki the inspiration for the *mise-en-scène*. Marco lives on a beautiful remote island as does Gina, the widow of his best friend. This idyllic but remote existence contrasts with the dark urban scenes of Milan where Marco takes his ruined air plane to be repaired by the firm of Piccolo. All the workers are women, reflecting the reality of the 1930s when the men had emigrated to look for work.

Fio Piccolo, the granddaughter builds Marco a new plane. She insists on going back with him to trial the plane, forcing Marco to confront his reluctance to re-engage with his old life as they fly from the darkness of the city to the sunlight of his island (see Figure 35). Miyazaki is again adopting a trademark motif of the journey where Marco meets influential figures who move him forward to reconsider his future.



Figure 35: Subdued lighting in the city

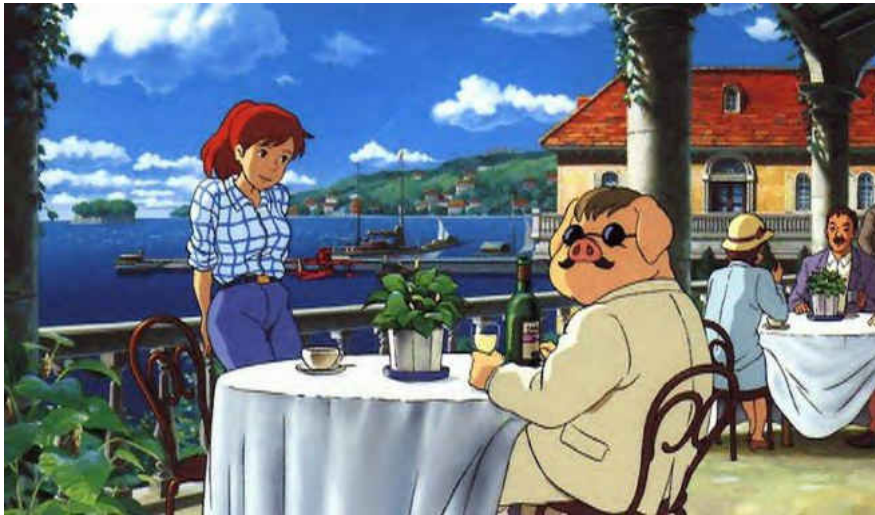


Figure 35: Brightness of life on the island

Miyazaki also used his knowledge of air planes to ground the film in 1930s Italy, with Marco's main rival, Curtis, flying a Curtiss RC-3.0. Although the pirates flew contemporary-looking planes, they were actually designed by Miyazaki. Miyazaki's homage to Italian air planes included naming the character of Marco's best friend Bellini after an actual Caproni pilot who died trying to set the world speed record. His studio, Studio Ghibli is named after Italian pilots' nickname for the Caproni CA-309.

Marco's flawed status as a hero in Japanese terms includes his refusal to engage

and do his best. This can also be interpreted as a metaphor for the rise of Fascism when ordinary people turned their backs and refused to confront evil. In contrast to the conventions adopted by the orthodox cel animation genre, the characters face choices and many actions are not clear cut. Miyazaki's interest in non-conformity is notable as a product of a highly conformist society. It also has a place in his debates with other animators, articulated in the scenes where Marco argues with his old friend, Ferralin, about animation.



Figure 36: Contrast in the representation of Marco and Curtis

Marco's main rival for Gina, is the American, Donald Curtis. The character is a good example of Miyazaki's refusal to produce 'black' and 'white' heroes and villains in the style of orthodox cel animation. Curtis is drawn wearing a nineteenth century American cavalry officer's uniform, similar to those worn in Western films by the all-American hero. He is ambitious – one day he will be the President (an oblique reference to Ronald Reagan) and therefore has a completely different outlook to Marco (see Figure 36). Yet on the other hand, Curtis is working for the pirates to eliminate Marco. By the final fight, his character, alongside Mamma Auito the pirate leader, becomes one in the slapstick tradition. Curtis is therefore as flawed a hero as Marco, confusing to viewers of orthodox animation but

completely in the mould of a Japanese anime hero.

The ambiguous masculine heroes places a focus on the female characters. Miyazaki provided a contrast in the two main female characters between the three-times widowed Gina and the young mechanic Fio. Gina is the widow of Marco's best friend Bellini and Marco does not think that he is worthy of her love. Gina, is a sad but also strong character who has lost three husbands to war but runs a successful nightclub. Although physically she is drawn in typical anime fashion with large eyes and a heart-shaped face (see Figure 37), her character acknowledges the sad Hollywood romantic heroine, always waiting for the hero to see her and turn around. In her case, Gina is waiting for Marco to visit her in her garden in the afternoon rather than the club at night. Marco's raincoat and hat drawn in the style of a Humphrey Bogart hero adds to the symbolism.



Figure 37: Miyazaki's production drawing of Gina

As a singer, Miyazaki is able to use Gina's character to express further symbolism. One of Gina's songs, 'Les Temps des Cherises', was the anthem of the Parisian

Communards who established a working class movement in Paris during the siege of 1871 when the Prussians attacked France. The movement was cruelly suppressed by the government. Miyazaki's inclusion of the song emphasises his opposition to Fascism. However it also symbolically links to Japan where the centuries-old 'Hanami' ceremony welcomes the spring represented by the cherry blossom or 'Sakura'. Gina's song expresses hope for the future both for Italy and Japan, linking both spatially and across time. I suggest that the soundtrack for the film therefore reinforces Miyazaki's attempts to ground the film in the cinematic not animation tradition. This is reinforced by the choice of a famous Japanese singer, Tokiko Kato, to voice the character of Gina.

Miyazaki's development of Fio is equally interesting in this regard. Fio has an important role to play as a counterpoint to Marc's introspection and Gina's passivity. Her conventional anime heart-shaped features are drawn in a far more dynamic style than Gina (see Figure 38). Fio is the catalyst for Marco to revive his fortunes and continue his fight against the pirates. She designs his new plane, (repairs his broken plane as a metaphor for his broken spirit) and enables Marco to express his guilt as a survivor. Her complete faith in Marco's hero status and his abilities as a pilot rouse him when Curtis attempts to steal her.



Figure 38: Fio Piccolo's dynamic features

Unlike orthodox animation, the final climactic fight does not bring resolution. When Marco wins the final air fight with Curtis, he does not claim either heroine, Gina or Fio but flies off into the sky and freedom. Miyazaki provide a hint of resolution – that Marco has once again turned back into a man. However the epilogue spoken by Fio only refers to her continuing friendship with Gina. Miyazaki refused to give the viewer the satisfying ending required of an orthodox animation film.

4.5.3.2 Cultural factors

The main theme is that of a man seeking redemption from his survival of a war where his closest friends died. This guilt is expressed through the surreal visual image of the hero with the head of a pig, perceived as of a low status in Japanese cultural motifs. The bizarre visual image is off-set by Miyazaki's use of hyper-realism to blend fantasy and historical narrative. This technique is also common in orthodox cel animation where animals frequently adopt the persona of historical figures, however '*Kurenai no Buta*' blends the fantasy and historical genres effectively in retaining Marco as a man with a pig's head not as a pig.

The narrative is developed using a mixture of the Hollywood romantic melodrama

genre of the 1930s, fantasy and comedy. However its interest to this study lies in the trans-coding of conventional genre norms to align with a specifically Japanese 'gaze'. The subversion of the Hollywood romantic 'myth' with a Japanese 'myth' creates a story which holds the audience's interest. This blending of real and other worlds would be familiar to Japanese audiences, as Japanese tradition portrays spirits as indistinguishable to humans in everyday life. 'Kurenai no Buta' therefore represents a form which does not fit into existing categories of orthodox animation but draws its creative expression from several existing genres from the cinematic tradition.

The mixture of genres, particularly fantasy and the romantic melodrama, I suggest is grounded more firmly in the Japanese cultural tradition. Despite the 1930s Hollywood style, the emotion expressed is Japanese not Hollywood, for example, the Japanese concept of 'mono no aware' or regret which cannot be expressed. Marco's final flight is an emotional statement of 'mono no aware' for there is no happy ending for him or Gina. Through its mixture of genre and its emphasis on symbolism, '*Kurenai no Buta*' provides interesting evidence of anime's status as a form which is more than a sub-genre of orthodox animation.

This departure from the existing orthodoxy is also reflected in the seriousness of the narrative theme. The diverse nature of anime sub-genres outlined in Chapter 1 cover a wide range of accepted cinematic genres and are therefore broader in nature than those which would be conventional for orthodox cel animation. This is an interesting extension to Lamarre's relational framework of 'multiple perspectivism' adopted for this study. '*Kurenai no Buta*' provides an opportunity to consider whether Lamarre's framework also applies to the use of multiple genres as well as to multiple technical perspectives.

5.5.3.3 Animation techniques

Initially there are several differences to note from the treatment which would be expected from orthodox cel animation. The drawings themselves are meticulous which encourages a sense of photo-reality unexpected in a film using full and limited animation techniques. The effect is achieved through careful observation of movement, for example the scene of the waves breaking on the beach in Marco's hidden cove and the exciting aerial battle scenes where the action is shown from the pilots' point of view.

'Kurenai no Buto' is interesting for the glimpse provided of Miyazaki's own attitude towards orthodox cel animation. In accordance with his normal working practice, the high technical quality of the film reflects the personal responsibility which Miyazaki assumed for the production of his films. In one scene he places Marco and Ferralin, his friend and former colleague, in a cinema (see Figure 39). An early cartoon is playing on the screen, with a pig fighting a mouse while 'Gertie' the dinosaur watches. This is Miyazaki's homage to Winsor McCay, the creator of Gertie which was the first cartoon character to be given a personality. The cartoon is drawn in the style of another important early animator, Max Fleischer, who is admired by Miyazaki as a creative influence on his own work. This reflexive scene indicates that, despite the significant differences between anime and orthodox cel animation, Miyazaki acknowledged the formative influences on his own work, beyond those of his own culture and heritage.



Figure 39: Marco and Ferralin in the cinema

The choice of animator is interesting in another context. Fleischer was noted for producing darker and more mature animation films than McCay and Disney. Through mixing the style of the two animators, I suggest that Miyazaki was expressing his own view that it is necessary to bridge the various approaches to animation. This is reinforced by the scene between the characters where Marco hates the film but Ferralin, the Fascist, enjoys the cartoon. I interpret this scene as Miyazaki expressing his own view of the importance of experimenting away from the norm otherwise it becomes an oppressive influence.

The attempt to break away from traditional routes, in the use of both full and limited animation and the development of complex themes and narratives, is one of the characteristics which ensures that Miyazaki is at the forefront of anime as a new animation form. As Lamarre noted (2002: 341), 'it is his skilful management of anime techniques that imparts a cinematic feel to his films'. The flying scenes are meticulous in their construction as a cinematic image, with the viewer able to follow movement through the panning of the multi-plane camera. This cinematic style is totally different from the effect of cel orthodox animation, which often is unable to provide an effective link between movement and time.

5.5.4 'Mononoke Hime' *Princess Mononoke* 1997

'Mononoke Hime' was intended to be Miyazaki's last major film and it provided additional evidence of his status both as a traditionalist and an innovator. His willingness to experiment in his visual style, characterisation and technique is apparent in the film, which marked another stage in the development of anime as a new animation form. His admiration for the Japanese cinematic tradition is also visible in this work which draws on cultural traditions from myth, folklore and theatre as a way of encouraging his audiences to look again at their own history and culture as they try to make sense of modern Japan.

The film was a spectacular success becoming the highest earning film in Japanese history. It is a work which challenges audiences on many levels and stretched the animation process in the complexity of the narratives. Miyazaki used some CGI to facilitate the production process but continued to draw the storyboards in his usual way (without a script).

5.5.4.1 Content analysis

Miyazaki intended to create an epic in the tradition of traditional Japanese period films or 'Jidaigeki', set in the medieval period before the Edo dynasty when the Japanese lived in small villages close to the natural environment. The film would weave the myths and legends of Japanese culture within the medieval landscape, providing an exciting interpretation that would stimulate the debate about how far Japanese society had moved from living in harmony with nature. The ambition of the narrative is notable for an animation film with interesting and flawed characters, both humans and gods. This complex characterisation provides further opportunities to examine the relationship of

anime with orthodox cel animation and with live action cinematic tradition.

'Mononoke Hime' takes its inspiration from Japanese legends and the traditional art of storytelling. Set in the Muromachi period (1392-1573), Miyazaki was interested in the process of change not from the perspective of the great nobles but from the ordinary person. As a storyteller, he wove the gods and spirits into his allegorical story of love and change. In a similar style to 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' (1986), the story relies on two young people to battle through together against gods, demons, samurai and the relentless progress of change. The hero, Ashitaka, is a young boy cursed by a boar god and thrown out of his village. San is a young girl brought up with the wolf god in the forest. Miyazaki does not make life easy for either of them and there is no resolution but after the final battle both reach an acceptance that life has changed forever.

The visual style of the film was based on actual historical landscapes which would enable the viewer to step back to when the Japanese lived in villages, worshipping the forest gods and spirits. Miyazaki researched artifacts and images from the period and his drawings create a blend of historical accuracy and a strong element of fantasy (see Figure 40). The dominant green colours reinforce the significance of the natural environment, with the pollution and poisoning of the ground appearing as disfiguring brown scars.

The non-diegetic music written by Miyazaki's preferred composer, Mamoru Fujiwara, or as he is more usually called, Joe Hisaishi, provides a reinforcement of the traditional atmosphere and historical context of the film. In certain scenes, the music echoes the natural sounds of the landscape, for example, bamboo falling in the forest. The opening scenes of the film demonstrate the effectiveness of the soundtrack as an integral part of the film's narrative. The idyllic scenes of the Japanese landscape are accompanied

by a lyrical traditional theme. Suddenly the scene changes to a desperate fight between Ashikata and the demon boar spirit and the music become threatening and frightening. Miyazaki makes it clear to his audiences that the natural world is full of dangers for humans who upset the natural rhythm.

The narrative moves between the real and the fantastical. As Ashitaka travels on his quest for a cure, he travels across a magical land led by the kodama spirits where he glimpses the 'Shishigami' (Forest God) in the form of a deer. He reaches a village fortress of iron workers led by Lady Eboshi. Aware that the village is polluting the river, nevertheless, Lady Eboshi is determined to carry on developing the industry. This characterisation of the human people's complete self-belief in their views is a major message of the film. Miyazaki has commented on what he termed as the self-righteousness of groups from governments to Greenpeace (Miyazaki, 2002). In 'Mononoke Hime' he challenged the audience to face the dilemma of modern Japan, the need for an advanced economy against the destruction of the natural environment which this will require.

Lady Eboshi is at war with Moro, the Wolf God, and her followers who want to retain the natural resources of the land. Ashitaka learns that it was Lady Eboshi who injured the Boar God which attacked his village, and therefore indirectly she was responsible for his quest. Moro has adopted San, the 'Princess Mononoke' of the title who fights bravely for her wolf family. San attacks Lady Eboshi for the attack on her adopted mother, Moro. Ashitaka is forced to knock them both out and he manages to escape the town taking San back to the wolves. He is again helped by 'Shishigami'. San does not understand Ashitaka's motives but she defends him against her siblings and the Boar Gods who learn

that Ashitaka killed their brother. Ashitaka is attracted to San but also understands that, ultimately, Lady Eboshi is trying to improve the lives of her followers. A giant battle occurs between the gods and the humans led by Lady Eboshi. The spies of the Mikado, who has made an agreement with Lady Eboshi to seize the head of Shishigami (and therefore gain immortality) weaken the gods. Shishigami kills Moro who is trying to help San. As Shishigami transforms to its night time form, 'Didarabotchi', the Night Stalker, its head is blown off by a stone bullet from Lady Eboshi's gun. The head turns into a glowing liquid which kills everything in its path including the kodama forest spirits. Ashitaka and San realise that the head must be returned to the god. When they manage to complete the task, the god restores the land after the battle. As the humans return to the town, they find that it has been devastated by samurai soldiers. Lady Eboshi, injured in the battle, now has to rebuild her town. San and Ashitaka, although in love, agree that they will live separate lives but will meet again.



Figure 40: Miyazaki's use of traditional dress

In Miyazaki's signature style, there are no black and white heroes and villains, only flawed characters with their own strengths and weaknesses. The two young people have divided loyalties and ultimately accept that they probably can never be together. The

battles between gods and people are destructive but neither side can prevent change. There is conflict on all sides, the humans between one another and with the gods, the gods between one another and with the humans. The harmonious relationship of the Japanese people with the natural world has gone forever.

5.4.4.2 Cultural factors

As a cinematic genre, the historical epic genre emphasises strong characters both heroic and villains. 'Mononoke Hime' displays many of the devices which are expected in the cinematic genre, but unusual in the animation genre. Ashitaka begins the film in typical hero style, saving his village from an enraged boar god. However in attacking the boar, he is cursed by the god to eventually die from the poison in his arm. His village is frightened by the attack and by stories of marauding samurai. Ashitaka then adopts another device of the genre, he begins a quest to find the source of the poison, advised by a wise woman. Ashitaka's journey is a life quest and his experiences add to the feeling of unease in the film. Ashitaka journeys into chaos, a group of wolves, one ridden by a girl are attacked by men led by a woman. In times of stress, Ashitaka's poisoned arm gives him great strength – although it is killing him, it also gives him help. Ashitaka is given the traditional feminine strengths of compassion and concern, yet he is also the warrior not a passive character (see Figure 41). This metaphor is consistent with Miyazaki's exploration of balance in his films. Unlike cel animation conventions, good does not triumph over bad, rather both attempt to find a balance where they can co-exist. Once again, Miyazaki attempted in his work to rationalise people living in harmony with technology rather than using it to pervert the balance of the natural world.

Women are also given strong roles in the film and Miyazaki continues with a configuration found in previous films of the relationship between a young and an older woman. San is not a typical romantic heroine. She has little compassion beyond her loyalty to her adopted family (see Figure 42). Lady Eboshi is ruthless yet also caring of her followers – everyone has work and the lepers are cared for. When she loses her arm in battle it cannot be replaced as in conventional anime motifs by technology. Loss is also extended to the gods. They are diminished by the battle, no longer able to rule over the natural world.



Figure 41: Miyazaki draws Ashitaka as the action hero

Apart from Ashitaka, everyone else is unable to compromise and as a result, everyone loses. The gods retreat to the forest, the humans have to rebuild, Ashitaka and San separate. This lack of resolution – the sense of 'mono no aware' subverts the

conventions of the historical epic genre. Miyazaki takes the classic cinematic genre and develops a uniquely Japanese interpretation. His codification follows the requirements of Japanese aesthetics and his characterisation is completely consistent with it. This sense of loss is balanced by love and loyalty. Ashitaka and San agree to see one another again despite their different circumstances. Ashitaka's curse is not lifted at the end of the film despite all his heroic actions. 'Mononoke Hime' promotes a humanist view which I suggest differs from 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' (1986) where Sheeta and Pazu seek a utopian ideal. But both demonstrate the same 'animetic' quality identified by Lamarre which transforms the expectations of the animation genre beyond the orthodox.



Figure 42: Miyazaki's drawing of San and Moro, her spiritual wolf mother both in solid form

The inclusion of the fantasy genre again acknowledged the conventions of Japanese culture. The gods are grimly protecting their natural environment. According to the Shinto religion, kami or nature affects all aspects of life. As a life force, kami pervades

all things in a harmonious way. In destroying the forest, Lady Eboshi sets in motion the apocalyptic future where 'kami' is lost and the relationship between the fantastic world and the human world is changed forever. The symbolism of the film can also be associated with the traditional Japanese Noh theatre which originated in the same Muromachi historical period. Demons, gods and spirits fight ritualised battles dressed in stylised costumes and masks. In Miyazaki's medieval world they all fight for scarce resources knowing that change is inevitable. Lady Eboshi's technology (iron making, stone firing guns) is the catalyst for change. Miyazaki used the genre to present his message. Change is important for economic prosperity, particularly in post-war Japan, however the environment is then vulnerable if humans do not acknowledge its importance.

5.5.4.3 Animation techniques

The effort of producing an animation film of 134 minutes in a mixture of historical epic and fantasy visual styles was a major achievement for Studio Ghibli. The film took three years to complete and needed to make thirty million dollars to break even (it made one hundred and sixty million dollars in the first five months in Japan). Miyazaki reluctantly adopted some CGI features for colouring scenes but maintained his use of full and limited cel animation. Miyazaki was clear about the visual iconography for the film. The land is solid and the epic vistas are brilliantly coloured. The narrative is reinforced by the visual – humans are associated with the colour red for blood. San is depicted covered in blood not from battle but from trying to extract a bullet from her adopted mother, Moro. Yet the first impression is one of savagery with San dressed in primitive clothes.

Miyazaki adopted the anime convention of giving his character non-Japanese facial

characteristics or 'nihonjin-banare', even though the film is clearly a Japanese historical epic. Ashitaka is dressed as a northerner but with Caucasian features. Similarly San has the characteristic large eyes and heart-shaped face of the typical anime heroine. This usage challenges the framing of the film as a Japanese cultural product when all other aspects reflect Japanese iconography. I suggest that this was a deliberate choice by Miyazaki to emphasise the 'other-worldliness' of his narrative, set in a time when gods and humans shared the earth, and therefore not grounded in historical fact. This 'otherworldliness' is also apparent in the mise-en-scène.

The back lit scene where Ashitaka glimpses Shishigami in the forest who is surrounded by a halo of light, reinforces the supernatural nature of the god (see Figure 43).



Figure 43: Shishigami animated in a dreamscape

A combination of cinematic wide shots and close ups ensure that the characters are not dwarfed by the vistas. The emotions and melodrama of the epic genre are drawn and animated using Miyazaki's signature full and limited animation technique.

5.5.5 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' *Spirited Away* 2001

The film's title literally translates as 'the mysterious disappearance of Sen and Chihiro'. Once again, Miyazaki extends animation genre conventions to explore profound issues through a film aimed at children. 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' is both a fantasy and an adventure film grounded very firmly in Japanese myth and folklore, yet it also contained Miyazaki's personal themes of identity, the transition from childhood and the relationship between people and the natural world. Miyazaki outlined his thinking as providing a story for ten year old Japanese girls beyond their fixation on romantic 'shojo' manga and anime where cute young girls find themselves in danger and are inevitably rescued by a handsome young man. Miyazaki wanted the girl to solve her problems for herself (Miyazaki, 2008). 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' is therefore another interesting example of anime which subverts a popular narrative animation theme, in this instance, a journey to a fantasy world. The elements which differ from orthodox animation borrow heavily from classic Japanese folklore motifs and demonstrate how the text is codified in a distinct way from the expectations of a Hollywood production.

5.5.5.1 Content analysis

'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' begins with a very unhappy ten year old girl, Chihiro, travelling to a new home with her parents. Chihiro is leaving her old life behind and is not looking forward to the future. Her parents take a wrong turn and end up in a deserted fun fair. Although Chihiro is uneasy, her parents find an unattended fast food stall and start to eat the food. Chihiro finds a large bathhouse and is warned by a young man, Haku, to leave before dark. When she returns to her parents, she finds that they have

been turned into pigs. Chihiro and her parents are trapped in a spirit world. Haku suggests that Chihiro asks for work in the bathhouse which is run by an old witch, Yubaba, who has an enormous baby, Boh. Yubaba only agrees if Chihiro changes her name to Sen, the first character of her name in Japanese. Haku seems to know Chihiro and he warns her that if Yubaba steals her name, she will be stuck in the spirit world forever.

Chihiro helps in the bathhouse – she cleans a stink spirit which turns out to be a polluted river which gratefully gives her an emetic dumpling. Haku is revealed to be a dragon which is attacked by a 'shikigami' spirit in the form of paper birds. Chihiro gives Haku part of the emetic dumpling and he coughs up a gold seal and a black slug which Chihiro kills. The shikigami is controlled by Zeniba, Yubaba's twin sister who demands the gold seal be returned. Boh is turned into a mouse by Zeniba. A mysterious masked spirit enters called No-Face who starts to eat all the workers. Chihiro gives him the emetic dumpling and he re-regurgitates everyone.

Chihiro decides to take a train journey with Boh and No-Face to see Zeniba hoping that if she gives the gold seal, the curse on Haku will be lifted. Yubaba is enraged and orders Chihiro's parents to be killed. Haku reminds her that Chihiro has taken Boh with her. Zeniba explains to Chihiro that the slug was the curse which Chihiro has lifted herself. Haku arrives in his dragon form and Chihiro realises that he is the spirit of the Kohaku river which Chihiro fell into as a younger child. Having had Boh restored to her, Yubaba makes Chihiro take one final test, to pick out her parents from the pigs. Chihiro answers correctly that none of the pigs are her parents. Haku guides Chihiro and her parents to the park entrance and promises to see her again. Her parents remember nothing about their experiences as they leave the theme park.

The depiction of alternative reality in 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' aligns with Todorov's definition that "the fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event" (1973: 91). In this sense, it is a fantastic film as the uncertainty is experienced both by the main character and the audience. In the bathhouse Chihiro sees her body disappear and panics before Haku saves her by giving her supernatural food. This motif echoes the well-known myth of Izanami, the creator of Japan. When Izanami dies, her distraught husband and brother Izanagi goes after her to the spirit world. However Izanami has eaten food in the spirit world and cannot return. The surreal and confusing society of the bathhouse also suggests the Japanese idea of 'matsuri' or carnival.

Although the narrative draws heavily on traditional Japanese myths, in true Miyazaki style, there are intertextual references from alternative cultures. Chihiro's experiences mirror those of Alice in Lewis Carroll's novel in that the character is apparently trapped in a surreal world, or that of Dorothy having to find the yellow brick road to escape in the film '*The Wizard of Oz*' (Fleming, 1939). The motif of choosing the wrong road is a common motif of Western fairy tales, as is the consequences of losing your name. Haku's inability to remember his true name is deliberately engineered by Yubaba to prevent him leaving. Chihiro is renamed Sen by Yubaba and the longer she stays the more she is affected by the spell and cannot recall her former life. A similar device is used in European folk tales such as Rapunzel.



Figure 44: Miyazaki's drawing of the unhappy Chihiro

Yet Miyazaki subverts the usual narrative of the quest to find the way home with a particularly Japanese concept of 'makoto' or spiritual grace. Chihiro begins her quest as an unhappy ten year old rebelling against her parents and her situation (see Figure 44). In working at the bathhouse, helping the spirits, losing her name, Chihiro makes the transition from child to young woman. Symbolically, she must lose her old identity and leave everything which is familiar behind before she can achieve the state of 'makoto'. Only then, will she become the woman which she could be. Miyazaki emphasises the Japanese perspective of succeeding through hard work, respect for the family and accepting personal responsibility rather than the Western moral convention of good triumphing over evil.

This perspective is associated with the depiction of the main characters. Chihiro becomes a responsible, thoughtful person, not a self-centred child through her own actions. She does not defeat wicked monsters and spirits in the Western convention to achieve her escape, but acts with thoughtfulness and kindness to the other spirits. Her parents reflect the greed of Japanese society in the 1980s. They are turned into pigs to

reflect their own inadequacies and it is Chihiro who rescues them, a reversal of the usual relationship between parent and child. In a conventional Shojo anime, Haku would be the hero, rescuing Chihiro from the bathhouse. In Miyazaki's alternative world, it is Chihiro who travels to Zeniba to remove the curse on Haku.

In an interview Miyazaki (2001) suggested that Chihiro's journey on the train to Zeniba is the actual end of the film where the symbolism of Chihiro travelling on her own, without her parents and Haku, demonstrates that she has successfully achieved the transition to adulthood.

Chihiro's journey reflected Miyazaki's concern at the unhappiness of post-war Japanese society where young people have lost their way and rejected traditional values. The film was an attempt to encourage young people to battle their own monsters and rediscover the positive values of Japanese society. Miyazaki also draws on the tradition of 'Noh' theatre - the expression of the character No Face who represents what can be lost through the misuse of technology, mimics a traditional Noh theatre mask. The film presents an identifiable Japanese acceptance of events happening which are not the results of the characters' actions. I suggest that this contrasts with Bordwell and Thompson's (1990) classic definition of narrative as actions where the characters are the causal agents.

The symbolism extends to Miyazaki's personalised messages about pollution and abuse of the natural environment. When the curse is lifted by Chihiro, Haku remembers that he is a dragon spirit of the Kohaku river whose banks have been spoiled by apartment buildings. The spirit helped by Chihiro in the bath house is also revealed to be a polluted river. The rivers have been polluted by humans – an intervention beyond the control of the natural environment. Hisaishi's music score reinforces the sense of traditional Japanese

respect for the spiritual world. In the bath house scenes, the soundtrack echoes Japanese musical themes.

5.5.5.2 Cultural factors

I noted in 'Mononoke Hime' (1997) the strong association in Miyazaki's films with traditional Japanese spiritual beliefs. This provided an added dimension to the mix of genres included in 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi'. The epic quest, the alternate world, the transition from childhood to adulthood all have a distinct role to play. I suggest that this sophistication extends beyond what the viewer would expect to codify as orthodox animation. Chihiro does not conform to the expected norm for a conventional heroine. She grows up, not by defeating her enemies but by having confidence in her new self. Her way out of the spirit world is internalised. Only when she has the courage to travel to Zeniba on her own does the way become clear (see Figure 45). Her parents, in contrast to Professor Kusakabe in *Tonari no Totoro*, are materialistic and do not respect the spirits. When Chihiro saves them from the spirit world, they remember nothing and therefore, by inference, have learned nothing from the experience. Miyazaki places the hope for the future in the hands of children. It is too late for the parents, young girls such as Chihiro need to have their own revelation about the importance of hard work and respect for the natural world if Japan is to recover from being a selfish and greedy society.

This journey does, to some extent, draw on the symbolism of Shinto. The spirits which visit the bathhouse, itself a metaphor for change and renewal, provide new experiences for Chihiro. The purified river dragon spirit, Haku, remembers that he is a river, even though his river bed has been filled with buildings. Her respect for kami (a core

tenet of Shintoism) restores his memory and his purified form as a dragon. I suggest that this parallel with Shintoism is a purely Japanese reaction to a fear of the destruction of the natural environment. This reading contradicts Napier's (2006) interpretation that the film is a more culturally neutral interpretation of 'cultural boundedness', where the problems of globalisation are addressed through using local cultural motifs and myths as a reaction to a perceived global threat. Miyazaki is on record in many interviews confirming that his intended audience is the Japanese public. It is therefore natural for him to express his own concerns about Japanese society in culturally specific terms not as a more generic statement of environmentalism.

I also propose that the subsequent marketing of the film beyond Japan provides evidence of the distinctiveness of 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' as an example of anime rather than a work associated with orthodox cel animation. Denison's (2007) analysis of the distribution of the film beyond Japan identified that the film retained its intrinsically Japanese aesthetic in France but not in America. This can be seen in the production of two language versions for the French release, one a dubbed version for audiences unfamiliar with Japanese conventions and the other with French subtitles for French otaku audiences wishing to experience the work in its original form. In America, by contrast, the film was promoted for the excellence of its English dubbed-version rather than for the complexity of its content and animation. The assumption in this instance being that American audiences would need to connect with American actors to lessen the sense of 'other' generated by the plot and visual themes. The conclusion that audiences used to orthodox cel animation would require the intervention of familiar dialogue patterns to interpret the film is, I suggest, a strong indication of the distinctiveness of anime from orthodox cel animation.

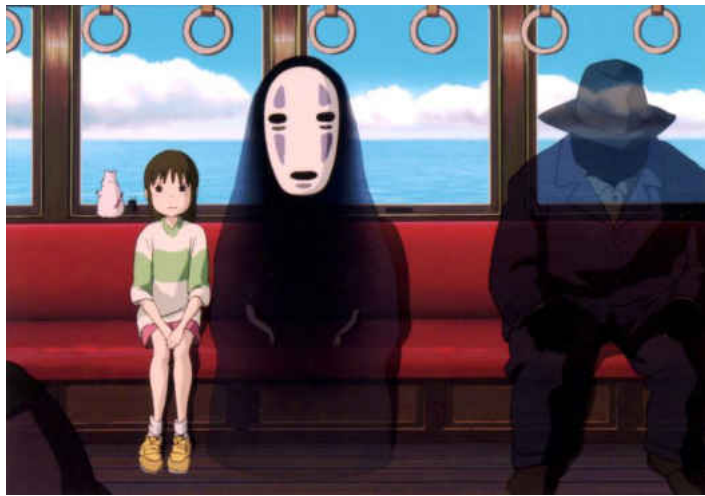


Figure 45: Chihiro's solidity as she journeys back to reality

5.5.5.3 Animation techniques

Miyazaki's original storyboards for 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' would have produced a film three hours long. This richness of imagery and extensive plot development in itself is a significant factor in placing anime outside of the conventional cel animation tradition. Miyazaki drew the bathhouse in the style of those of the Meiji period such as Yashiroyu. The public nature of the Japanese 'sento' or bathhouse provided a physical space for the film where anything can happen and anyone may walk in.

Chihiro has to work hard for the first time in her life and accept the very odd characters which turn up wanting to use the bathhouse. The animation of the abandoned theme park where Chihiro and her parents wander is also carefully depicted as a gaudy metaphor for the waste and inefficient spending of the 1980s in Japan. Miyazaki blended the real and the fantastic aspects through using detailed drawings of objects within fantastic landscapes. In typical Japanese style, Chihiro solidity demonstrates her journey

back to reality as she faces Zeniba for Haku's sake.

Miyazaki uses the storyboard technique to show his animators the emotional depth he expects to be reflected in the finished shot. This storyboard of Chihiro talking to Haku



Figure 46: Miyazaki's Chihiro and Haku Storyboard



Figure 47: Completed drawing

The animation of the sento with its grotesque inhabitants who can suddenly change shape and become bigger monsters any time was a challenge for the animation techniques favoured by Miyazaki. In imitation of Chihiro's hard work, over 1,400 shots were drawn with limited CGI utilised to support the colouring of the drawings. Miyazaki once again took editorial control over the final sequences included in the film (See Figures

46, 47). I suggest that 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' represented a masterpiece of Japanese cel animation which, in its animation, provides evidence of the separate identity of anime from orthodox cel animation.

5.6 Summary

The distinction between anime and orthodox cel animation was reflected in the differing reception to the film 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' by audiences in Japan and the U.S.A. A critical success in Japan, the Disney dubbed version was not well received when it was released in 1996. Disney altered the film to conform to the expected norm for an orthodox Hollywood animated film. In summary, Miyazaki's intentional silences were filled with dialogue and the music soundtrack by Hisaishi was extended from 39 minutes to 90 minutes to reassure American audiences who expected animation accompanied by music. His characterisation was altered so that Sheeta and Pazu were voiced by older teenagers and Sheeta was portrayed as a romantic interest for the pirates rather than her original role as a mother figure. References to Gulliver's Travels were removed as unnecessary to the story and, for Spanish-speaking countries, 'Laputa' was removed from the title to avoid the word association with 'prostitute'.

'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' is an important work not only as Miyazaki's first independent work but also for his intentional and thoughtful reworking of the conventions of both animation and the Japanese cinematic tradition. It is a landmark in the development of anime as a different animation genre from orthodox cel animation and established a creative framework for Miyazaki's subsequent work. In terms of cultural influences, Miyazaki successfully draws on his own cultural upbringing and concerns for

modern Japanese society to articulate his signature style of detailed characterisation and complex narratives. The evidence from the five films is consistent with regard to his use of specifically Japanese aesthetics, subverting familiar themes from Japanese folklore with examples of intertextual references to Western texts. The film texts provide valuable comparisons with the genre norms of orthodox cel animation as outlined by Wells (1998). Miyazaki's creative output demonstrates that anime deviates significantly from the genre norm. Specific continuity and narrative form are complicated through a deliberate mixing of genres where characters await developments alongside the viewer. Unlike the cartoon where specific continuity is represented by an assurance that an individual action by the character will have predictable consequences, anime represents 'de-assurance' where characters move between differing realities. Content similarly deviates from the orthodox approach with a richness of visual style and a sophistication of theme and characterisation. Miyazaki's use of reflective scenes, which include stillness and a lack of dialogue, also provide evidence of a specifically Japanese aesthetical approach rarely found in orthodox cel animation.

In relation to the animation technique, although there is clearly a unity of style which mimics live action cinema in the establishment of shots, Miyazaki's work illustrates the uniquely animetic approach where a flat, limited drawing style provides a contrast with the movement-driven approach of orthodox animation. The relational framework between anime, animation and the live action cinematic tradition emphasises the construction of anime as a multi-layered visual construction where all the possible layers (background, foreground, characters, colouring) are drawn to provide spacing within the image and therefore provide movement. The aerial sequences in 'Kurenai no Buta' between Marco

and the Pirates, O-Totoro's magical flight with the children in 'Tonari no Totoro' and Sheeta and Pazu's flying sequences in 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta', are examples of the use of a particularly Japanese drawing perspective in depicting visual depth.

The more conventional theme raises the issue of whether the film is closer to the expectations of orthodox animation than other works by Miyazaki. Such a conclusion would require the work to comply with the genre specific elements – content, characterisation, narrative and animation technique. On closer examination, I suggest that 'Tonari no Totoro' as a creative text is more complex than a lyrical animation of childhood. The interpretation of the narrative as 'fabulous' suggests a subtle message by Miyazaki that the forest spirits represent a form of reality apparent to those who respect the relationship between people and nature. I suggest that this sophistication is closer to the close observation found in the Japanese cinematic tradition, for example in Ozu's emphasis on characterisation and diegetic sounds, than that found in orthodox animation.

The use of the concept of an 'auteur work' to differentiate anime from orthodox cel animation has already been made in relation to Miyazaki's earlier works. His distinctive style and attention to detail are in the tradition of earlier Japanese auteurs such as Akira Kurosawa (Desser, 1988). The rebel which emerged is a 'romantic hero faced with a post-modernist world' (Kuhn & Radstone, 1990:31). However within the anime industry, the title, 'anime-shon no kamisama' or 'God of Anime' has only been given to the popular anime director of the 1950s Osamu Tezuka, who was a significant influence on Miyazaki. This suggests that, in Japan, Miyazaki must achieve more beyond recognition as a successful studio director.

However from the perspective of this study, I propose that his personal creativity, as

expressed in 'Kurenai no Buta', delineates anime as a development as much in the cinematic tradition as in the animation tradition. This is expressed in Miyazaki's treatment of reality in 'Kurenai no Buta', where the constraints of limited animation's twelve frames per second do not impede his ability to create naturalistic movement, nor do the static scenes detract from the illusion of reality for the viewer. This is partially due to the photo-realism of the *mise-en-scène* but also to Miyazaki's skill, already observed in 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' (1988), for using limited animation to move the characters across the screen in a credible way – particularly once again in the flying sequences. Miyazaki has expressed a view to complete a further film of Marco's adventures, this time the fight against Fascism during the Spanish Civil War. 'Kurenai no Buta' is a lesser known work, however it provides a valuable insight into Miyazaki's influence on the construction of a filmic tradition for anime beyond orthodox cel animation.

With 'Mononoke Hime', Miyazaki created an anime film which reached new global audiences. Yet the ambitious use of the epic genre set a standard for complex narratives, characterisation and animation form which was deeply embedded in Japanese myth, history and cultural identity. The signature Miyazaki theme of the misuse of technology and the consequences for the natural world is explored in complex and rich imagery more familiar in the live action cinematic tradition than orthodox cel animation. I suggest that the film demonstrates a skilful re-working of the anime convention which reinforces the relational framework between anime and cinema and anime and animation.

'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' was critically acclaimed in Japan and beyond, winning the inaugural Oscar for animated films and the Golden Bear award for all films at the Berlin Film Festival in 2002. It became the first film to gross over 200 million dollars

before being released in the U.S.A... The success of the film on a global scale reflected the considerable impression that it made on viewers and critics. It also provided evidence of the complexity of narrative, characterisation, animation form and auteurship which delineate Miyazaki's creative output as a significant development of anime beyond the formulaic. In doing so, anime achieves a status beyond that of a sub-genre of orthodox cel animation and becomes an interesting new development of the broader filmic tradition.

Miyazaki would be a notable film director, whichever medium he chose to use. His ability to challenge the preconceptions of audiences towards his subjects is emphasised in the freedom provided by animation to create alternative realities. His auteurship is evident in the way that his films impact on viewers, for example the challenges they provide to viewers of the relationship between Japanese society and its use of technology. In the next chapter, I examine another prominent anime director, Satoshi Kon, to determine whether similar 'animetic' characteristics are found in his creative works.

Chapter 6: Pushing the Boundaries, Satoshi Kon (1963 - 2010)

"Viewers are too used to being treated kindly." (Kon, Interview, 1997)

6.1 Defining the evidence

If Hayao Miyazaki's work moved anime to a broader, richer blending of form, depth and characterisation, the creative output of Satoshi Kon provides evidence of the ability of the medium to display complex and sometimes bewildering visual landscapes which blur the boundaries between animation and cinematic conventions even further. Satoshi Kon (1963 - 2010) challenged his audience to move between truth and recollection and accept the impossible when reality and fantasy blend in dreamscapes played out on Tokyo streets.

Where modern cinematic reality in a digital sense involves the addition of special effects such as CGI to an inert virtual space, animation begins from the premise that movement and form are present from the initial drawing. Lamarre's radical perspectivalism hypothesis for anime provides an explanation for Kon's approach to animation which can be described as one of 'illusion', which counters the explanation for orthodox animation as one of 'assurance' (Napier, 2005). Elements of Azuma's post-modernist 'database animals' hypothesis are also useful in de-constructing his text 'Pafekuto Buru', where the use of simulacra can be interpreted as an expression of the relationship between 'reality' and 'illusion'. Satoshi Kon's untimely death at forty six in 2010 cut short a creative output which, I suggest, had already demonstrated how anime was developing as a new cinematic form.

In this Chapter, I critically analyse his four feature films from the perspective of content, cultural factors and form for evidence that anime represents a new and more

sophisticated form of animation which does not rely on orthodox conventions for the basis of its production and consumption. Satoshi Kon expressed irritation in interviews when challenged why he used the medium of animation for his films, two of which were adaptations of contemporary novels. He started as a manga artist and expressed himself creatively in visual terms, 'when I make films, I cannot think how to do it without drawings' (Kon in Osmond, 2007: 23).

6.2 Satoshi Kon's approach to animation

Satashi Kon was born into a post-war generation which embraced manga and anime from an early age. Although much of his creative output was based in Tokyo, he was born and brought up in the northern island of Hokkaido where his father worked for a delivery company. Kon studied graphic design at Musashino Art University, graduating in 1982. His early influences included Katsuhiro Otomo's manga 'Domu' (1980) which included children with telekinetic powers. Otomo is better known for his anime 'AKIRA' (1988) based on an earlier manga. Otomo's consistently dystopic themes of nuclear destruction, alienated youth and rebellion against authority are reflected in Satoshi Kon's own works.

The initial training which Kon received as a manga artist and animator was reflected in the meticulous approach which he took towards his individual scenes and the extensive use of storyboards rather than a script to structure his films. Following his graduation in 1987, Satoshi Kon worked as Katsuhiro Otomo's assistant when he had the opportunity to write the script for Otomo's live action, dark comic horror film, 'Warudo Apaatoment Hora' *World Apartment Horror* (1991). Until 1997, Kon worked on several successful manga and

anime films, learning his craft as an animator, script writer, lay out designer and art director. Madhouse Inc recognised Kon's talent and in 1997 agreed to produce his first feature film, 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue*.

Satoshi Kon was therefore completely immersed in Japanese animation during his career. He admitted that he enjoyed the work of science fiction writer Philip K. Dick, the live action films of Terry Gilliam ('*Time Bandit*', 1981; '*Brazil*', 1985 and '*The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*', 1989) and Roy Hill's '*Slaughterhouse Five*' (1972) (Osmond, 2007). This interest in fantasy is reflected in his mainly non-linear narratives and plots. However, in examining Kon's work in this Chapter, I suggest that the influences on his approach to animation are intrinsically Japanese. In a complementary way to the work of Hayao Miyazaki, Satoshi, Kon also used the technique of 'open compositing' where movement is generated by sliding the layers within the image. Unlike Miyazaki, Kon focused on human relationships rather than relationships between humans and the environment. However his last film, 'Paprika' (Kon, 2006) touched on Japanese attitudes to technology. Kon's films also echoed Miyazaki's use of content and form to explore the depiction of alternative realities. For this reason, Satoshi Kon's films are an important source of evidence for my premise that anime represents a distinct animation form from conventional orthodox animation originating from an Asian cultural context.

6.3 The influence of Madhouse Inc.

Kon's ability to create innovative and challenging anime films was dependent on a studio infrastructure willing to risk valuable staff time on unconventional and potentially non-commercial animation. Unlike Miyazaki's establishment of Studio Ghibli, Satoshi Kon

did not have existing commercial success as the basis for establishing his own production studio. The support of Madhouse Inc. was therefore a crucial aspect of his creative development as an anime director.

Madhouse Inc. was formed in 1972 by animators who formerly worked for Mushi Production, the studio founded by Osamu Tezuka. Mushi Pro was instrumental in developing the television anime market in Japan in the 1960s and the founding directors of Madhouse Inc. were trained in the industrial production techniques required to meet the continuous requirements of television and direct to video productions. In addition, Madhouse Inc. acquired a growing reputation in the 1970s and 1980s for spotting new talented directors and providing creative space for new ideas. The company also followed Mushi Production's model of working closely with manga artists in transferring successful manga books into animated series. Masao Maruyama, one of Mushi's founding directors, is credited with ensuring that the company embraced new ideas and collaborations.

Madhouse Inc. worked closely with other animation studios from the 1970s – providing animation for Miyazaki's films at Studio Ghibli amongst others. It is currently owned by a consortium including Nippon Television and Sony. The studio established broader creative partnerships including feature animation films with South Korean and Chinese studios. In January 2012, Madhouse became one of two studios worldwide to obtain a licence to produce anime versions of the American comic strip '*Peanuts*' by Charles M. Schulz. The artistic success achieved both within Japan and in overseas festivals by Madhouse Inc productions reflects the ambition of the company to extend the boundaries of anime.

The global aspirations of the studio and its creative working environment enabled

Satoshi Kon to pitch for new directions for his films beyond the day to day television production which provided the commercial return for Madhouse Inc. as a studio. In adapting two novels for his films, 'Pafekuto Buru' (1997) and 'Paprika' (2006), he was also able to rely on studio support in developing his trademark style of contemporary urban settings mixed with cyberpunk and sci-fi fantasy. In addition to his four feature films, Kon also directed a successful thirteen episode anime television series, 'Moso Dairinin' *Paranoia Agent*, for Madhouse Inc. in 2004, and was working on a fifth feature film, 'Yume Miru Kikai' *Dream Machine*, at the time of his death in 2010. Madhouse Inc. announced that the film will be completed using the notes left by Satoshi Kon with around 600 of the 1,500 shots already animated.

The significance for Miyazaki and Kon of a commercial studio system which was willing to risk investing in feature length animation films which had no immediate commercial appeal is an interesting difference between anime and the Hollywood model where commercial return dictates the initial investment.

6.4 The nature of Kon's auteurship

Satoshi Kon claimed not to have been overly influenced by Japanese film tradition (although a close reading of 'Sennen Joyu' (2003) reveals a detailed homage to influential cultural figures). His confidence in his chosen medium was based on a long apprenticeship in the production line. Speed in scene setting, shot transition and editing was the main basis for his creative direction not the influence of other anime sub-genres. The challenge for his audience is to stay with the action in all four of his films. The common threads for his personal style relate to the depiction of urban landscapes in all their drabness and

hopelessness linked to a rapid and unnerving narrative and plot line which often disorientates the characters as well as the viewer. As with Miyazaki, both characters and viewers wait for the next twist with no use of cinematic conventions such as dramatic irony to help the audience understand the plot.

Also in common with Miyazaki, Kon disregarded the conventions of orthodox animation techniques and conventions for a cinematic approach of a rapid transition of non-linear shots which reinforces the blurring of reality and fantasy. Kon remarked that one of the advantages of animation, unlike the live action scene where the viewer may be distracted by an object in line of sight, is that the animator is able to include only what he wants the viewer to see (Osmond, 2007). As a consequence, Kon's use of *mise-en-scène* is tightly controlled and also meticulous in his level of detail. The small production studio in 'Sennen Joyu' (2003) is portrayed as cluttered, dirty and disorganised. Tokyo at Christmas in 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' (2003) is not picture card white but grey and miserable. The lighting of each scene is appropriate for the location and time of day. This grounding in reality reinforces Kon's idiosyncratic use of hyper-reality to portray the fantastic – I explore Kon's depiction of realism and his interpretation of 'truth' as opposed to 'memory' (Foucault, 1995) later in the Chapter.

Similarly his characterisation expressed his Japanese cultural identity. Kon depicted his characters with Asian characteristics. He ignored the anime convention of 'nihan banare' except in the case of 'Pafekuto Buru', where conventional anime character types are signifiers for a fantasy scene. Kon's characters display human faults and failings, their claim to be the main focus of the viewer's attention is based on their reaction to events. The three main characters in 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' (2003) are physically unattractive and

mentally scarred. His characters face real life situations where their options to influence events is limited by real world constraints. This approach is much closer to the live action cinematic tradition than orthodox animation where characters transcend the restrictions faced by live action on actors.

Where Kon retained the conventional anime portrayal for his fantasy sequences, he deliberately refrained from providing the usual cues for the viewer (a shot transition of wavy lines on the screen for example) that the scene is moving from reality to fantasy, leaving the viewer unsure whether the scene actually depicts reality or fantasy. The alter ego dream girl Paprika, for example, is a lively extrovert compared to her repressed real life character Chiba. Paprika's appearance therefore should help the viewer know that the sequence is fantastical. However Paprika appears to be moving in the real world. Similarly in 'Pafekuto Buru' (1997), Mima's apparent alter ego, dressed in her girl-band costume, appears in real world scenes. Kon provides a point of view which encourages the viewer to emphasise with Mima's increasingly delusional state. Is the alter ego figure actually there or is this a product of Mima's madness?

Kon's use of animation to address adult themes and complex questions of human psyche represented new directions for anime. In the next section, I explore whether his films can best be described as attempts to translate live action conventions to animation or whether they represent a further expression of Lamarre's many-layered 'animetic' form, distinct from orthodox animation.

6.5 The evidence from selected works

As a director who focused on adult themes, his work provided an alternative body of

evidence to Miyazaki's anime films. Yet, as with Miyazaki, his work also demonstrated a break with orthodox animation's emphasis on the cinema of assurance. His exploration of the boundaries between reality and fantasy were starker than Miyazaki, with an interesting use of the 'double bind' technique of a story within a story to express alternative perspectives.

A particular aspect of Satoshi Kon's work which exemplified the distinct nature of anime in relation to orthodox animation was his focus on experiences rather than script or plot to move the narrative forward. This device was used to depict fantasy in a non-linear way with time and space a secondary consideration. Characters 'float' through different experiences in dream time, very much in the 'superflat' context noted in Miyazaki's use of flying sequences. The lack of depth in the drawings emphasises the illusion of moving without gravity or real world constraint. Lamarre's division of anime into its discrete 'animetic' layers was mirrored by Kon in relation to his treatment of narrative. His films contained multi-layered narratives as reality, fantasy and memory blend into one another, often from the point of view of the main character.

Kon's work is an interesting example of truth being an 'experience' (Foucault, 1997) where characters experience real life problems with little room for manoeuvre. This perspective is counterbalanced by his interpretation of the Japanese aesthetic of 'mono no aware' applied as a motif where the depiction of a memory of previous events indicates time passing (Cavallaro, 2009). I return to Kon's exploration of the conflict between 'truth' and 'memory' in the analysis of 'Sennen Joyu' (2003) as the main character Chiyoka recalls her long life as an actress moving between real life events and her fictional experiences in her films.

This complexity of approach contrasts with the management of reality in orthodox animation where the audience and director generally agree a similar perspective for the reality effects. The experiences of the animated characters are reflexive, taking centre stage, with little cross over into the space reserved for real life experiences. The image remains at a comfortable distance for the viewer. As Wells (1989) thoughtfully observed, is it possible to dream in animation? Anime, as represented by Satoshi Kon, finds little difficulty in moving between alternative perspectives where truth is 'experienced' and dreams blur reality.

6.5.1 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue*, 1997

Kon's first feature film was based on a novel by Yoshikazu Takeuchi which the author intended to be directed as a live action production. The author wrote a script which was pitched to Madhouse Inc. Katsuhiro Otomo had illustrated the novel and he suggested to Madhouse that Satoshi Kon should be the director. Kon read the script and was initially unimpressed. Madhouse considered that the pitch was a high risk proposal. Eventually all parties agreed that, as long as Kon retained the three elements of 'stalker', 'idol' and 'horror', he was free to interpret the novel in his own way.

The film demonstrated the maturity of anime in exploring adult themes of sexual violence and mental illness in a convincing depiction of the character Mima's spiral into self-delusion. The setting is a play within a play, with the viewer challenged to make sense of the plot line which constantly asks, 'who are you?' (Mima's only line in her attempt to become a television actress acting in in the television drama, 'Double Bind').

6.5.1.1 Content analysis

Satoshi Kon seems determined to confuse his audience from the opening scenes. 'Pafekuto Buru' was billed as a psychological thriller yet the establishing scene is that of a typical anime sci-fi battle with aliens. It provides no narrative link to the following scene of a set by a popular J-pop girl band, Cham, at the same fan festival, except to reinforce the rapid switch from fantasy and reality which is the sub-text for the rest of the film. Mima, a popular member of Cham, announces on stage that she is leaving to become an actress. The role of girl bands in Japanese media culture is well defined. Members need to be cute, attractive and inexperienced. The viewer is given a glimpse of Mima's manager, Tadokoro, and his assistant Rumi arguing over Mima's future. Mima appears to be a spectator in this discussion.

Kon has established in this opening sequence that Mima is a commodity with a public persona that needs to be managed. Mima's decision to leave therefore is not her decision, although the fans' perception is that she wants to move on. He cuts to a shot of her real self quietly cycling home to her flat and then back to her Cham concert where a riot has broken out. Her announcement has thoroughly shocked her fans. One obsessed otaku, Uchida, cannot accept her move to star in a television drama where Mima's character suffers a rape and poses nude. A character makes a reflexive comment about Jodie Foster. (In 1976, a fan obsessed with the actress, John Hinkley, shot President Reagan. Hinkley later commented that fantasy and real life became blurred and this motif underpins 'Pafekuto Buru').

The public perception of Mima and her true self are conflicted in the film. This

conflict drives the narrative as the difference between Mima the person and Mima's pop star persona and her character in the television drama blurs both for Mima, and consequently, for the viewer. As she dances, the security guard, Uchida, gazes at her. He is also known as Mi-Mania (bringing together 'Mima' and 'mania'). There is a threatening shot where Mima appears to perform on Uchida's hand. She is a possession, not a person with free will. Kon deliberately gave the impression that Mima herself is a character created by her fans (see Figure 48). In terms of Azuma's hypothesis, this can be interpreted as Mima being an otaku 'database' item or simulacra of interest.



Figure 48: Mima in her Cham persona and appearing to dance on Mi-Mania's hand

At home in her flat she reads a fan letter which contains the line 'I always like looking into Mima's room' and then receives a threatening telephone who calls her a

traitor. The slow development of an invisible threat is reminiscent of Hitchcock's live action cinema work, particularly '*Vertigo*' (Hitchcock, 1958), rather than that of orthodox animation (see Figure 49). The psychological devices are for real effect not as a parody.



Figure 49: Mima's otaku fans are portrayed as threatening

Mima's new career as an actress involves her acting in a psychological drama, 'Double Bind'. The menace grows as one of the production team is injured by a letter bomb. The director decides to go for shock value and re-writes Mima's character so that she suffers gang rape as a stripper. Kon extended the scene of the production team shooting the simulated rape. Mima is clearly traumatised by the scene which the director stops half way through as the male actor whispers he is sorry to Mima.

The simulated violence is graphic. Rumi, Mima's manager leaves the set in tears. Kon cuts to a shot of Mima singing with Cham. The contrast is shocking. Animation enables Kon to move quickly between shots, blurring the film within a film motif. When Mima arrives home her fish in the tank are dead and Mima collapses. She appears to see herself in her Cham costume mocking her attempts to be an actress. Her fish come back to life. Is Mima delusional?

Kon cuts to Mi-Mania who is writing an Internet blog, Mima's Room, in a room which

is a shrine to her. Her alter ego stands at his shoulder. Mima becomes a popular character in the television show and her sexy character completes a nude photo shoot. Mima is haunted by her alter ego dressed in her Cham costume. Cham perform at a concert and the ghost performs on stage. The audience appears to see her but is this Mima having delusions? Mi-Mania is shown answering e-mails to Mima's Room with Mima's ghost in the Cham costume. He promises her that he will get rid of the imposter.

The threats continue. Kon stages a classic horror scene in an underground car park where Shibuya the scriptwriter for Double Bind is killed. Mima visits the members of Cham, sees the ghost and chases her, running in front of a lorry driven by Mi-Mania. She wakes in her room and is visited by Rumi, but this appears to be a scene from Double Bind. Kon used the same shot of waking in bed in several sequences in the film as a metaphor for Mima's alternative experiences.

Is this Mima or Mima playing her character? The next murder scene is the photographer of the nude photoshoot. He is apparently killed by the pizza delivery boy who turns into Mima stabbing him in a bloody scene with a television on in the background, showing Yoko, Mima's character in Double Bind, stabbing someone. Mima appears to wake from a nightmare but finds bloody clothes in her wardrobe. As Mima turns left, the camera follows her and she is her character Yoko facing the psychologist character in Double Blind. When the psychologist asks her name, Mima replies pop star, not actress. The psychologist is seen telling two men that Yoko has multiple personality disorder, she thinks that she is Mima the singer. The shot moves to show Mima in a glass booth speaking but no one hears her. Is Double Bind therefore reality and the rest an illusion?

Kon immediately provided another twist. Double Bind is confirmed as a television

show and Mima is congratulated on her performance. When walking across the stage she is attacked by Mi-Mania and only escapes by killing him with a hammer. Fantasy has become reality. Mima is discovered by Rumi alone with her clothes torn and is taken to her flat. But when she awakes she realises that it is not her own flat. She calls the show's producer and the shot moves to the studio with his corpse and that of Mi-Mania side by side. Mima's alter ego appears in the flat and is revealed to be Rumi dressed in Mima's Cham clothes (see Figure 50). The shot varies between Mima's ghost and an overweight Rumi.

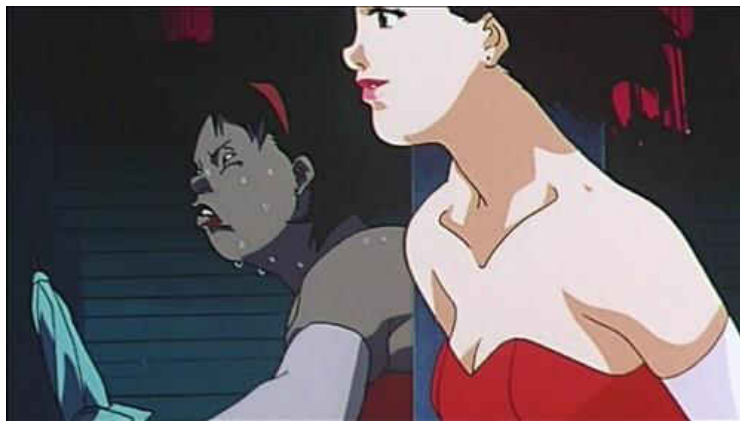


Figure 50: Mima's doppelganger reflected as Rumi in Cham costume

Rumi is revealed as encouraging Mi-Mania to commit the murders and providing the information for the Internet site. She attacks Mima who escapes over the roof. Eventually, Rumi falls on a broken piece of glass and stumbles into the path of a lorry whose headlights appear to be stage spotlights. Mima saves her and later visits her in a mental hospital where Rumi still thinks that she is Mima. As she leaves, the hospital staff think that she looks like the famous actress Mima, Mima looks at her reflection and responds in her own rural accent that she is real. Kon used this device to provide the contrast between Mima the 'real' person talking on the phone to her mother and Mima's actress character speaking with an urban Tokyo accent.

The film demonstrated that anime could deliver a sophisticated plot and characterisation beyond the usual production values of orthodox animation. Kon's mentor Katshuhiro Otomo influenced a number of cyberpunk anime films, particularly 'AKIRA' (Otomo, 1988), his sci-fi vision of a dystopian society following the destruction of Tokyo. 'Pafekuto Buru' demonstrated a similar search for identity. The layered narration where the thematic layers for Mima as a person, Mima acting in Double Bind and Mima the dreamer blend together with little explanation or resolution. This technique adds to the film's ability to provide suspense. I suggest that the multiple layering of the narration exemplified Lamarre's description of anime as a form of 'radical perspectivalism'. Kon mimics the visual layering of the cels to create the moving on screen image with a complex layered narrative which links the threads of the plot.

The film was well received in Japan as well as globally. There was genuine surprise that an animated film could successfully explore serious contemporary issues. Romney (1999) described it in a 'Sight and Sound' review as a 'culturally astute invention'. Kon himself was dismissive of the interpretation of the film as a critique of the Japanese J-pop culture.

'To be honest I care very little about the idea of the stalker... the storytelling aspects interest me much more. Looking at things objectively and subjectively gives two very different images. For an outsider, the dreams and the film within a film are easy to separate from the real world. But for the person who is experiencing them, everything is real. I wanted to describe that sort of situation'. (Kon talking to Tom Mes, 2001)

6.5.1.2 Cultural factors

The conventions of orthodox animation require a recognisable narrative and focus on the movement of characters (Wells, 1989). Kon challenged these conventions in

interesting ways. His refusal to develop a linear story is unusual in animation although well used in live action psychological thrillers. Kon observed that his earliest cinematic preference was for live action cinema, with director George Roy Hill a significant influence. Hill's technique of matching cuts to link disparate scenes can be seen in the opening sequence of 'Pafekuto Buru', where Mima performing on the stage is cut to Mima 'performing' in her everyday life. A confusion between the depiction of illusion and reality is established by these initial shots.

'Pafekuto Buru's emphasis on characterisation demonstrates a key element of the cinematic psychological thriller genre. Although Kon has been compared to Dario Argento, the Italian director best known for violent 'giallo' (thriller) films, he denied being aware of Argento's work before directing 'Pafekuto Buru'. The use of non-linear time and space also demonstrated a characteristic of the psychological thriller genre where flashbacks enable the viewer to understand the emotions and thoughts behind the characters' actions and behaviour. Visually separating depictions of reality and fantasy in animation requires careful thought. How can animation represent the 'real' world when it is, in itself, an artificial construct? Anime's ability to subvert linear ideas of animated movement as demonstrated by Kon's work is central to my premise that anime represents a distinct form.

In placing the illusionary sequences in the same visual world view, Kon utilised hyper-realism as interpreted by Umberto Eco (1990), that is, as a commentary on the fake representation of Mima's life as a pop idol and actress. Both Rumi and Mi-Mania can only accept Mima in her illusionary role as a pop idol. Her transformation into an actress playing a sleazy role is therefore unacceptable to her previous fans. Her 'real' life persona as a manipulated young girl is unable to cope with her inability to please everyone. Kon

developed the suspense through visually representing all Mima's realities in one physical multi-layered space where Mima exists as a pop idol (the doppelganger), the actress (abused woman and murderer) and the successful young woman. In resolving her paranoia, Mima emerges as a stronger, more mature person.

The characterisation of Mima provides an opportunity to examine anime's greater complexity as a genre compared to orthodox animation. In a scene from 'Pafekuto Buru', Mima the person reads the Internet blog, Mima's Room, for the first time. She is amused that the blog appears to know a great deal about her life. As the film moves forward, the blog becomes threatening. How does the website know so much about her? She realises that the blog is fiction as she did not write it. However, who is she? Mima the person is portrayed as a quiet personality who is largely defined by the people around her. Her image becomes more significant than her genuine personality which leads to her psychological breakdown.

Is it significant that the 'doppelganger' is dressed in her Cham costume? A role where Mima literally had a 'voice' which appears to be now lost. The change in her character's identity in the television show, 'Double Bind', to a rape victim is not her idea. The subversion of her personality is constantly shown in the film. Where initially her flat is tidy and organised, as the film progresses, it becomes untidy and disorganised. Mima looks to the Internet site, Mima's Room for the order which is missing in her own life even though she knows that the site is not real. The threat from the Internet blogger is a contemporary twist to the established woman-in-peril sub-genre. Mima's 'life' is exhibited for a global audience without her permission or control.

Yet in its interpretation, the film does exhibit some elements of orthodox animation.

Despite the placing of Mi-mania in the 'real' world narrative layer, the viewer is expected to believe that the stalker cannot recognise Rumi wearing Mima's Cham costume in planning the murders and writing the web blog. This expectation is more representative of the acceptance by viewers that animation is not reality.

Napier (2006) emphasised the variety of 'gazes' on Mima's character throughout the film, citing the emotional intensity of the simulated rape scene where the viewer feels Mima's distress at this 'violation' of her image. From her adoring fans as a pop idol, to the television production team and her manager who wants to be Mima, everyone wants to control her actions. Kon however appeared to play down the implication that the film is a critique of celebrity culture.

'To reveal behind-the-scenes secrets of the entertainment industry was never my intention. I simply wanted to show the process of a young girl maturing, becoming confused because her old set of values gets shattered, but is reborn as a mature being as a result.' (Kon interviewed by Tom Mes, 2005)

I suggest that the critical context within which "Pafekuto Buru" has been examined and reviewed reflects a live action psychological thriller. Kon's chosen medium of animation is a significant factor, but one which is overshadowed by the focus on the fundamental genre characteristics associated with psychological thrillers of identity, reality, characterisation and suspense.

It is tempting to interpret Kon's use of reflection as a metaphor for a search for identity in terms of Lacanian theory and the concept of the 'gaze'. I suggest that this is problematic. Kon did not refer to the influences on this aspect of his visual construction. His major influences can also be interpreted in terms of accepted Japanese aesthetics. Mima seeks reassurance in her reflection. When Rumi is chasing Mima, the mirror shows

her overweight self although Mima appears to be chased by herself in the Cham costume. Kon constantly reinforces Mima's reflection on differing surfaces – photographs, the computer screen, the television screen, the train window. The doppelganger Mima dressed in her Cham costume stares at Mima through her reflection in the train window. It symbolises Mima's confusion of identities from pop star to actress to the 'real' Mima. An actress takes on new identities and the plot device of a play within a play is used to display Mima's increasing self-delusion (see Figure 51). Mima sees the doppelganger as a real person. This depiction is consistent with an accepted Japanese cultural belief of 'ikiryo', manifestations of the spirit released when the living person is emotionally disturbed. The belief outlines how a person's soul (usually a woman) may temporarily leave their body and manifests itself in front of the person they hate (usually due to jealous thoughts). This will result in illness or death, as in the case of Rumi in the film. In the final shots, the doppelganger and Rumi come together in a merging of personalities. In doing so Rumi becomes delusional and Mima retains her normality as a stronger, more mature personality. All the unstable emotion has transferred to Rumi.

Kon's avoidance of the conventional use of narrative space exemplified by establishing shots is deliberately disorientating for the viewer. The resulting contradictions and paradoxes add to the impact of Mima's decline into paranoia. Mima confides in Rumi, not realising that she is the stalker. She is afraid that the doppelganger will take her over.



Figure 51: Kon's use of reflection to depict duality

The shot changes to a reassuring hand on her shoulder telling her that it is only an illusion and not real. The following cut is to Mima talking to the psychologist on the set. Is Mima acting or is this the 'real' Mima? There is no reassurance for the viewer from the director. As the action is only seen from Mima's point of view, the viewer is reliant on subjective perception to distinguish reality from fantasy. Kon presents actions only to suggest later that they are hallucinations.

The accompanying soundtrack for the film continues the multi-layered approach which typifies anime's position beyond conventional animation. The music by Masahiro Ikumi combines Cham singing cheerful J-pop songs inter-woven with a sinister main theme which is unsettling and uncomfortable. The cross-over provides a threatening context for the narrative, for example where the script writer, Shibuya, is killed in the underground garage to a Cham song. The dichotomy of the 'soto-hare' world of Cham where colourful brashness is admired being subverted by the horror of the brutal murder was used as a device by Kon to shock Japanese audiences unused to any dilution of the J-pop trope with murder and death.

If there is an added dimension of specific influence of Japanese cultural identity, I suggest that this is associated with Japanese aesthetics which emphasise the balancing of

opposite forces. Mima's private and public persona, her perception of reality and fantasy, her struggle to retain sanity and not descend into madness all represent two distinct standpoints. A basic tenet of 'nihonjinron' includes the importance of balancing the needs of the self with those of social membership. In this acceptance of the tension created by opposing forces, Kon demonstrates Kitaro Nishida's concept of 'basho' (an affirmation of duality as a normal human condition).

An additional aesthetic concept of Japanese culture is that of the balance between 'shibusa', the spontaneity of effect and the spontaneity of action. Therefore Mima's normal persona exhibits 'shibusa', a restraint of emotion, but her dream persona expresses an exuberance which represents the 'soto' world where brashness and over the top emotion is acceptable. This explanation is also relevant to an analysis of the use of 'shibusa' in Kon's anime 'Paprika' (Kon, 2006).

In analysing the empirical characteristics of anime as a cinematic form therefore, 'Pafekuto Buru' provides an interesting combination of contemporary cinematic genre (psychological thriller) and Japanese cultural influences. Kon's subversion of the elements of the psychological thriller genre with elements of Japanese aesthetics provides a new perspective which extends the boundaries of the orthodox understanding of animation as a genre.

6.5.1.3 Animation techniques

In examining the films of Hayao Miyazaki, the influence of the animetic perspective (Lamarre, 2009) was identified in the use of layering across the image and the resulting depiction of depth from a non-Cartesian point of view. These techniques were also

adopted by Satoshi Kon – his background figures tend to be flat and faceless, for example in the concert scenes. In addition, the photo-realism of Kon's drawings follow Miyazaki's personal meticulous attention to detail, for example, in Mima's flat the marks left by old posters are clearly visible (see Figure 52).



Figure 52: Kon's detailed depiction of Mima's flat

His use of photographs to create location backgrounds ensured that the subsequent mise-en-scène accurately reflected a gritty urban landscape. The lighting and placement of objects adds to the perception of real world presence. Kon coloured his shots appropriately for the time of day. Mima performs in front of harsh stage lighting which isolate her from the audience beyond.



Figure 53: Mima performs under harsh Klieg lights

The depiction of artificial lighting, often at night, is shadowed as in the lighting sequences often used by film noir (see Figure 53). The framing of objects acts as a reminder of the metaphor of a story within a story. When the 'Double Bind' script writer, Shibtani, walks into the underground car park he is framed by the 3:4 dimension of a television screen. Television screens and camera lenses reflect Mima's image with the computer screens showing Mima's fictional room. Even the fish tank in Mima's flat is drawn with the same 3: 4 proportion.

In the transition arrangement of shots, Kon also broke with orthodox animation conventions. As with Miyazaki's films, the use of shot transition to reinforce emotion through close ups and panning efficiently managed the use of limited animation to develop scenes. However Kon was more explicit in his rejection of technical conventions for animation, for example in ignoring visual clichés. The film contained no establishing shots, cross fades or dissolves to indicate a change of location or time. Mima is shown on the set of Double Bind then awake in her bed then back on the set. Has she dreamed the previous sequence or not? The increasing use of jump shots with increasing ellipses adds to the atmosphere of tension.

The use of the cut as a transition between shots was a device associated with the

director Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963). In live action cinema, Ozu used a cut to an inanimate object as the link between two scenes. It has its origin in the Japanese aesthetic element, 'kire'. In Zen Buddhism 'kire' represents the abrupt change, for example, between inhalation of breath and exhalation. For traditional Noh theatre actors, 'kire' was an important technique in presenting the play. The subtle relationship between the 'cut' and its role in 'continuation' or the next action is particularly appropriate in the case of animation where the relationship of the space between the drawings for a single scene relates to the space between shots. The cut therefore also instigates the continuation.

Kon deliberately used action shots even though there was no action on the screen to increase the perception of Mima's confusion. This was also partially to accommodate the requirement to lose a hundred shots from the final film. The speed of jump shots increases as the film reaches its climax. The noticeable calmness of the final shots when Mima visits Rumi in the mental hospital suggests the new stability in Mima's life. It is also an acknowledgment of the concept of 'Jo-ha-kyu' which underpins presentation in traditional theatre. This is demonstrated as a slow buildup of the action followed by rapid action and a reflection at the end. Kon's pacing of 'Pafekuto Buru' can therefore not only be interpreted as following Western film convention for the psychological thriller genre but also continuing a traditional convention for the performing arts in Japan.

6.5.2 Sennen Joyu *Millennium Actress*, 2001

In his second feature film, Kon again adopted the theme of the experiences of a woman performer. 'Sennen Joyu' *Millennium Actress* released in 2001 explored the tension between truth and memory as a storytelling device. He commented that 'Sennen Joyu' was

also an opportunity to explore the idol/fan relationship in a positive light in comparison with the dark obsession expressed in 'Pafekuto Buru' (Kon, 2001).

As an elegy to Japanese live action film making, 'Sennen Joyu' reminds the viewer of how film and history are inter-woven. During the film historical events are recalled through the elderly actress Chiyoko Fujiwara's experiences, and increasingly these memories become fused with her fictional roles throughout her career. As with Mima, the narrative develops from Chiyoko's point of view. In this instance, her loyal fan is Genya Tachibana, a small time film producer who has been told to film her reminiscences when the film studios which employed her are to be demolished. Kon's fascination with truth and memory drew on 'mono no aware' as an underpinning device.

The other motif of the film is 'the film within a film', a motif also prominent in 'Pafekuto Buru'. In the film's opening scene, a woman astronaut prepares to blast off from the moon despite the protests of a man (see Figure 54). She tells the man that she must keep her promise and return to an unknown man. The camera pans out to middle aged Genya Tachibana watching a sci-fi film. From the start Kon makes it clear that this is again a multi-layered story. The question is planted in the viewer's mind, who is the man and why is he important to the woman?



Figure 54: Chiyoko plays the part of an astronaut

6.5.2.1 Content analysis

It is not surprising that 'Sennen Joyu' received funding from the Japanese government as the plot sought to highlight the role which live action films played in twentieth century Japanese history. Chiyoko Fujiwara is an elderly film actress who is considered to be an icon for the important roles she has played. She is now largely forgotten after retiring into seclusion. Genya records his introduction to the demolition of Ginei Studios and takes his crew to visit Chiyoko's house. The viewer realises that here is the woman astronaut now grown old. Genya begins by giving Chiyoko a box containing a key which appears to have an unknown significance.

As Chiyoko begins her story the scene changes to her childhood. During one winter Chiyoko meets a young man carrying a painting. It is soon obvious that he is hiding from the police and Chiyoko shelters him. He has a key around his neck which Chiyoko finds in the snow when he disappears. Chiyoko chases the train along the platform but fails to see him. While the viewer sees Chiyoko's story play out in front of them, Genya and his assistant Kyoji can be seen at the side of the screen with their digital cameras. Genya comments that he always cries during this scene. Kyoji responds by demanding when did

her story turn into a film? Kon's narrative layering places Genya and Kyoji within the diegetic space of the image. Chiyoko's own story now blurs into a fictional re-telling as a film. What is truth (i.e. objective experience) and what is memory (i.e. subjective recall)?

The pace of the film increases. The viewer is now also part of Chiyoko's story. Chiyoko's artist had spoken of finding his friends in Manchuria, then a Japanese colony. When Chiyoko has an opportunity to make a film in Manchuria with Studio Ginei she accepts to have an opportunity to find her artist. As she travels on a train, she is attacked by bandits and uses the key to unlock the train door. Genya is still observing the action and intervenes to save her. Chiyoko flies through the door straight into a samurai drama. She is now a princess trying to reach her lord besieged in a castle (see Figure 55). Genya again protects her while Kyoji is hysterical. In the castle a witch persuades her to take a potion. This device appears to be a pastiche of a scene in Kurosawa's 1957 film, 'Kumonosu-ju' *Thrones of Blood*, itself based on Shakespeare's play, *Macbeth*. The scene moves to the present, where Chiyoko and Genya are re-acting roles in her famous films.

Further action scenes follow when Chiyoko moves from medieval Kyoto to twentieth century Japan. The same characters, including a scarred soldier who appears also to be seeking her artist, follow her. Genya maintains a protective presence. Chiyoko finds her artist in one scene only for him to disappear again saying that they will be re-united one day. Chiyoko is imprisoned only to be released to the destruction and famine of Japan in 1945. In the ruins of her home she finds a painting of her as a young girl with the message, 'until we meet again'. Chiyoko is still making films for Ginei but a scene when she appears to be talking to her mother turns into a scene with a rival actress Eiko, who is revealed as causing her problems in previous scenes. Chiyoko then plays a teacher and a

pupil asks what the man she loves looks like. Chiyoko cannot remember and breaks down. The shot changes to a shot of Chiyoko cleaning when she discovers the missing key. It is 1969 and in the background the television is broadcasting the American moon landing. The scarred man arrives begging forgiveness. Chiyoko runs out of the house.



Figure 55: Chiyoko drawn using traditional Japanese iconography

In the following sequences Chiyoko runs through history, through Japan and through her life. The metaphor links back to her running to catch the train. At last Chiyoko is on the moon, looking at a tromp l'oeil painting of the mountains of Hokkaido. The artist is in the painting and he waves to Chiyoko who runs to the rocket to blast off. The film reprises the start and this time it is Genya pleading with her to stay. An earthquake shakes the set where Chiyoko is filming the sci-fi film. She is saved by a young Genya who finds the key in the rubble of the set. The narrative returns to the present where Chiyoko's house is shaken by a tremor. Genya and Kyoji follow the ambulance to the hospital. Kyoji is sad that Chiyoko never found her artist. Genya confesses that the scarred man had told him many years before that the artist had died in prison. Chiyoko was chasing a ghost.

In hospital near death, Chiyoko tells Genya not to grieve; the key has unlocked her memories restoring her youth. Chiyoko in essence was living in fear of growing old – the old witch symbolises her older self. She will continue to run after her artist. When she

closes her eyes, Kon provides a final twist. In the next scene, Chiyoko blasts off from the moon watched by Genya and Kyoji, murmuring, 'After all, it's the chasing after him that I love'. The unexpected explanation of Chiyoko's often heroic chase after her artist both disconcerts the viewer and reinforces Chiyoko as an independent woman, not reliant on her fans adulation nor an unrequited love for a man.

The strong characterisation of Chiyoko was a deliberate choice. Kon commented (Kon, 2006) that although there were similarities between Chiyoko's experiences and those of well-known post-war actresses such as Setsuko Hara and Hideko Takamine, he was more interested in expressing personal emotion than directing a biopic. The other characters revolve around her and she is the catalyst for the story. In essence Chiyoko is the spirit of Japan, who links differing time experiences in Japanese history. I suggest that Chiyoko's recall (memories) relates to her films, her experiences through time to actual historical 'truths'. This interpretation therefore can be linked to 'Pafekuto Buru's blending of illusion and reality previously discussed.

The film's motif of a woman running which continues throughout the film, is depicted as Chiyoko running towards her destiny not a woman running away. Her artist hero symbolises an image which gradually fades. Eventually Chiyoko is chasing an ideal not a person. Kon (2006) admitted that he related to this impossible 'quest' in that he also sought the perfect idea for a film which always became harder the closer he became to completing the work. The plot device was also used in another Madhouse Inc. film, 'Toki o Kakeru Shojo' (Hosoda, 2006), literally the girl who ran through time (released outside Japan as '*The Girl who Leapt through Time*'). This sci-fi anime was loosely based on a character in a novel by Yasutaka Tsutsui, an author much admired by Kon.

Chiyoko is such a strong influence on the narrative, the other characters struggle to make a difference. However I suggest that the characters Genya and Kyoji enable the viewer to retain a framing of the film within a film as they carry their digital cameras through differing historical periods within the diegetic space of the anime. As a character, Genya does not demonstrate Azuma's otaku mentality, creating non-narrative database elements. He is part of the modernist 'grand narrative'. His devotion saves Chiyoko throughout the film and his determination to keep her memory alive through his film is in contrast to the behaviour of Mi-mima in 'Pafekuto Buru' who wishes to dominate the presentation of Mima's image through his Internet blog. Kyoji's character can be associated to the silent film era role of the benshi who interpreted the film for the audience. This role resonates with the film's atmospheric re-telling the story of the Japanese film industry itself re-telling the story of Japan.

Kon (2006) admitted that the hardest task in directing the film was ensuring that the script made sense as time and place changed so rapidly. His use of the old witch with a spinning wheel was not only as a homage to Kurosawa, but also as a plot device to remind the viewer that although the witch represents mortality, the spinning wheel demonstrates that time is not linear and that the spirit can continue. Similarly the key was included to provide an element of mystery for the viewer - Kon's use of a 'MacGuffin'. Earthquakes are also used by Kon as a metaphor for change. As earthquakes denote destruction and rebuilding in the history of the nation, so Chiyoko's life is changed when an earthquake occurs.

As with 'Pafekuto Buru', the film's soundtrack was an important element of the overall mise-en-scène adopted for 'Sennen Joyu'. Kon commissioned the music from

Susumu Hirasawa and commented that he developed the storyboards whilst listening to it (Kon, 2006). Hirasawa wrote a score which included many loops and repetitions, complementing the cyclical theme of the narrative.

'Sennen Joyu' replicated the complexity of Kon's animation in 'Pafekuto Buru'. The strong characterisation and ambitious visualisation of the multi-layered narrative demonstrated a sophistication of approach where Kon effectively used the 'animetic' interval, the space between frames, to move his characters freely through time, for example the sudden change in shot where Chiyoko leaps through the Manchurian train door and into medieval Japan.

6.5.2.2 Cultural factors

Kon adopted a very different tone for 'Sennen Joyu' which maintained a bewildering range of transition between scenes. Again there is no obvious linear narrative, although the historical sequences follow in a correct timeline. Kon ignored previous conventions of time and space for historical dramas with Chiyoko returning to the present at specific points in the film. He spoke in an interview in 2006 that the key theme for the film was time. People live in the present but also have an interest in the past and the future. Film is a medium which enables the director to move his characters at will through time.

The trademark narrative twists were designed to keep the viewer's attention as did the rapid transition sequences. I have already discussed the characterisation of Chiyoko. It is possible to interpret Chiyoko's final line as a subversion of the love story. She is not after all a tragic heroine, incomplete without her hero. She enjoys the chase, by definition a male characteristic in romantic melodramas. Kon commented that 'It was because of

Millennium Actress' last line, in order to say it, that I made the film.....it isn't Chiyoko's ego that's on display, it's her attitude, her style of life that's shown here'. (Kon in Osmond, 2009:54). Chiyoko is portrayed as an action figure, astronaut, warrior, princess and geisha. Her character commands respect even though she is constantly being saved by Genya. In this analysis, I disagree with Ortobasi's (2008) conclusion that Chiyoko's character may be defined as an example of the male gaze which reveals Kon's sexist attitude towards women.

Kon's sympathy for feminine perspectives and viewpoints stemmed from his confessed inability to write rounded male characters without emphasising the negative aspects (Kon, 2001). He described how the difficulty of understanding the female psyche enabled him to project imaginary ideas and obsessions through his female characters which he would have rejected for male characters.

This is exemplified in the story of Genya's devotion. He is so affected by Chiyoko's story that enters her story – literally 'drawn into' the plot. This intervention, apart from saving Chiyoko on the sci-fi set is implausible. The film demonstrates therefore elements of illusion and magic – common themes for anime. Genya and Kyoji are benevolent voyeurs almost in the role of benevolent spirits, able to intervene as a plot mechanism when needed. However, Genya is weakened as a character. His role appears to be to act out his own version of events – he constantly saves the object of his devotion who is grateful but not demonstrative. Kon appears to be undecided whether to make Genya a comic figure as a middle aged otaku or as a solid link to reality in the confusion of the plot.

The historical accuracy of Kon's drawings was based on an extensive period of research. Kon claimed to have read six hundred books to learn about Japanese history

and culture before completing the storyboards. His research also included specific referents for his audience. When Kyoji is almost killed by a hail of arrows, the comic moment is enhanced by a similarity to a famous scene in Kurosawa's film 'Kumonosu-ju' (1957). Chiyoko's costume is very similar to the wife in Kurosawa's 'Rashomon' (1950). When Genya wears a mask to save Chiyoko, he resembles Kurama Tengu, a hero of Japanese action films. As he appears, Kyoji shouts, 'we've been waiting!' the traditional audience welcome for an actor in a Kabuki play. Chiyoko's role as a teacher has echoes of Kinoshita's famous drama 'Nhiyu-shi no Hitomi' (1954). Her romantic pose with a machito-maki headscarf in a 1950s setting is reminiscent of the 'surechigai' genre of frustrated love. The most famous example was a trilogy, 'Kimi no Na ha' *What's your name* which links neatly to Kon's previous film. In its homage to Japanese live action cinema, Satoshi Kon again demonstrated how his layering approach in terms of content and genre created a far more complex cinematic form of animation which was directly linked to cultural aesthetics.

6.5.2.3 Animation techniques

Satoshi Kon used the same team of animators for 'Sennen Joyu' as his first film. He observed in 2006 that this enabled him to concentrate on creative ideas, leaving the organisation to his production team. Kon followed the precedent established for his previous film in preparing the animation through the use of detailed photography. The shots of Chiyoko running after the train were based on repeated filming of a woman running to capture the natural movement. In the rapid transition as Chiyoko 'runs' through history, her costumes and background change seamlessly. The static nature of the foreground reinforces a sense of layering the action across the image, Kon (2005)

compared it to 'nishiki-e', a form of traditional brocade tapestry.

The quality of the hand drawn cels reflected Kon's meticulous technique. The recurring motif of tree rings to represent Chiyoko's life, for example, is repeated in the wood in her house. Kon's use of colour also reinforced the sense of recall. Older events appear paler and faded, more recent events are vibrant. As with Miyazaki, the animation included movements of quiet reflection as a contrast to the rapid transition of shots. Another example of the use of the Japanese aesthetic 'Jo-ha-kyu'. I suggest that these are techniques which demonstrate anime's distinction from the approach adopted by orthodox animation.

6.5.3 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' *Tokyo Godfathers* 2003

Kon had already planned his next venture when 'Sennen Joyu' was released. He chose to develop a story about family relationships and abandonment through the eyes of three homeless misfits living in the Tokyo underworld. Kon (2002) explained that the creative idea for 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' came from the situation of homeless people in his local area. The film provides an opportunity to explore whether Satoshi Kon continued to develop a multi-layered approach for his films, or whether his films are, in practice, an imitation of live action conventions reproduced in the medium of animation.

Kon maintained his own very visual aesthetic to develop the narrative with a strong characterisation achieved through his personal completion of detailed storyboards for characters in each individual scene. The three main characters have all abandoned their previous lives. Gin is a middle-aged alcoholic, Hana a transsexual drag queen and Miyuki a teenage runaway. The mise-en-scène is dark and gloomy despite Kon placing his story

between Christmas and New Year, a traditional time of hope and renewal in Japanese culture. This is a subverted Christmas story which is interesting in the cultural context in that Japan's celebration of Christmas has no Japanese origin beyond the post-war American occupation. Japan is not a Christian country and therefore the plot of the film can be interpreted as attempting to make sense of the signifiers for Christmas in the context of Japanese society.

Through tackling a contemporary, real world social issue, Kon again breaks new ground for anime and moves away from the emphasis on magical realism in his previous films. In analysing 'Tokyo Goddofazazu', I examine whether Kon's use of unusual character types establishes new ground in animation or whether, ultimately, Kon's subversion of the normal 'family' merely borrows from existing conventions. Kon's creative source for the film can be linked back to 'Three Godfathers', a successful novel written by Peter B. Kyne in 1913, where three cowboys are forced by circumstances to look after a baby. At least four live action films have used the motif, notably 'Three Godfathers' (Ford, 1948). It could be argued that '*Ice Age*' (Saldanha, 2002) loosely adapted the same motif for the highly successful family CGI animation film. In view of Satoshi Kon's stated admiration for the films of Terry Gilliam, the plot can also be interpreted from the perspective of a modern re-telling of a traditional motif. In the same way that Gilliam used the medieval Arthurian legend of the Grail as the sub-text to '*The Fisher King*' (Gilliam, 1991).

6.5.3.1 Content analysis

The film opens on Christmas Eve in a nativity concert in Tokyo. This is in itself an unusual occurrence in an anime film as Christians are a social minority in Japan. As with his previous films, Satoshi Kon began the narrative with a performance within a performance. The Christmas story in Japan was promoted as part of post-war reconstruction by the American occupying army. In this instance the archetype of a miraculous child is the catalyst for a series of coincidences which impact on the relationships of another homeless 'family' in contemporary Tokyo.

In the soup kitchen audience are three characters who have established an unorthodox 'family'. They are only there for the free food and immediately in the long opening credits Kon establishes an atmosphere of alienation and abandonment. The physical unattractiveness of the characters is highly unusual both for anime and orthodox animation (see Figure 56). However I examine later whether this visual device reflects a long tradition of portraiture in Japanese visual aesthetics.

Hana, the transsexual has a complex mixture of feminine and masculine characteristics. The character is visually dominant with dramatic movements choreographed across the screen. He attempts to mother the runaway teenager Miyuki with little success. Gin is an alcoholic who has lost his family. During the opening credits the trio find a baby girl in a basket with a locker key in the middle of a pile of rubbish. Kon subverts the archetypes of a magic child and the quest. The three unlikely protectors argue over what to do. Hana is desperate to keep the baby whom he names Kiyoko or 'Pure' as 'a present from God'. Gin and Miyuki insist that they take the baby to the police. Eventually they agree to try and find the mother. This seems hopeless but in the station locker there is

a photograph and night club cards. On the journey to the club they rescue Ohta, a yakuza boss, from a car crash. He is also going to the club for his daughter's wedding. The club owner, Mitsuo, is the loan shark who ruined Gin. Before Gin can attack him, Mitsuo is shot by a waitress who kidnaps Miyuki and the baby in a taxi. Hana gives chase but Gin has had enough. The waitress is a South American hit man in disguise who takes the hostages home to a rundown area. Although he is clearly a criminal, Miyuki and the baby are warmly welcomed into the hit man's family. This is another subversion of the 'family' – in this family Miyuki is not rejected.

Gin finds another tramp and they go to Gin's tent where the next coincidence occurs. Gin realises that the tramp has two photographs which show buildings in the photograph in the locker. Gin may know the location of the baby's family but he and the tramp are beaten up by a group of thugs (a contemporary problem in Tokyo and a plot device also used in Gilliam's film, *'The Fisher King'*). Miyuki dreams that her alienated policeman father and mother turn into Gin and Hana. She is reunited with Hana who takes her and the baby to a drag act club, Angel Tower, where they find Gin who has been rescued from the thugs.

The trio find the house of the missing waitress Sachiko but it is deserted. Sachiko's husband gambled away all their money. Gin confesses that he also lost his family the same way. Miyuki realises that the problem which drove her from home was caused by a misunderstanding. She tries to telephone her father but cannot speak. Hana collapses and is taken to hospital by Gin who meets his daughter now a nurse. Hana tries to leave Gin to encourage him to go back to his family. As they leave the hospital, Hana and Miyuki see Sachiko about to throw herself off a bridge and stop her. Hana is furious that Sachiko

abandoned her baby but they give the baby back to her.

Meanwhile Gin finds Sachiko's husband who confesses that his wife stole the baby from a maternity ward. The three frantically chase Sachiko and the baby who go up to the roof of a tower block. Miyuki persuades Sachiko to give her the baby as they are filmed by a television helicopter. Miyuki slips, Sachiko drops the baby and Hana rescues Kiyoko but both of them fall towards the ground before a blast of wind lifts up the paper banner which Hana is holding onto. Hana and the baby float to the ground. The three are taken to hospital where Kiyoko's real parents tell a policeman that they want the three to be the baby's godparents. The policeman turns out to be Miyuki's father. The viewer is given a glimpse of a paper bag left by the tramp for Gin in which there is a winning lottery ticket for fifty million yen. Kon complete the film's resolution with the baby cooing happily. The three characters have successfully completed their quest and begun their own redemption.



Figure 56: Kon's dramatic visual characterisation

Interesting elements of 'Tokyo Godfathers' demonstrate how limited animation can deliver a strong contemporary drama. Kon ground the film in an urban wilderness, relying on strong visual characterisation and dialogue to keep the audience's interest. The narrative develops in the real world and is more linear than his previous films.

The story is told through a set of remarkable coincidences which involve the three main characters in reflecting on their situation. This intrinsically Japanese approach to self-reflection and the effect of individual behaviour on the 'group' is a fundamental aspect of Japanese culture. Whereas it is acceptable to behave in an informal relaxed way with family and friends, 'uchi' or insiders, behaviour with strangers, 'soto' or outsiders, must conform with restraint and modesty and be appropriate for the situation. The three main characters deviate from this conformity throughout the film, reinforcing their alienation from normal society. Their collective inability to behave properly on the train results in them being ignored by their fellow passengers.

On the other hand, their willingness to consider the effect of their actions is heroic from a Japanese perspective. Beginning with the tenth century fictional hero Genji, who was a courtier as well as a warrior, heroes need to be well aware of the importance of 'mono no aware' and its requirement for self-reflection. Each of the main characters in 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' find themselves in situations where they confront their previous actions. Gin is forced to confront his abandonment of his own family as he berates Sachiko's husband for gambling away all the family money and leaving the stolen baby in the rubbish. Miyuki has to confront her attitude towards her father and her guilt at stabbing him. Hana has to accept that he will never have children as he hands the baby back to Sachiko. Not only have the three been abandoned, they have also abandoned their family and friends. Here again is the Japanese adoption of the Taoist belief in the importance of balance between competing forces to achieve harmony.

Kon returned to the use of dreams in 'Tokyo Goddofazazu'. However these dreams serve to provide an insight into the actions of the main characters rather than, as in

previous films, to move the narrative forward. Thus Miyuki dreams of Hana and Gin as her family not her parents. The characterisation demonstrates a complexity of behaviour and emotion which is unusual in Western animation. Hana is drawn with exaggerated features with camera shots used to heighten emotional scenes. Kon drew twenty storyboards for one scene in the hospital where Hana accuses Gin of deserting his family in front of Gin's daughter. Tze-Yue (2010) drew attention to the similarity in Kon's use of visual expression to add tension to the narrative to the artists of the Muromachi Period (1333-1573). These artists became experts in portraying the mental state of the Zen Buddhist priests ('Chinzo') in describing the path to enlightenment. Thus the portrayal of the eccentric Zen Buddhist priest, Ikkyu (1394-1481) suggests similarities with the same physical tension as Kon's portrayal of Hana (see Figure 57).



Figure 57: Ikkyu (1394-1481)

Hana the Transsexual

Hana can be viewed as the archetype neither one nor the other which is associated

with liminal traits. He disconcerts the audience with inappropriate public behaviour in Japanese society – shouting at strangers, berating Gin a hospital corridor in front of his daughter. Yet Kon also animates him as a larger than life comic turn – traits of Napier's carnival anime theme. Osmond (2009) observed Hana's long masculine stride as a parody of the 'running girl motif' which was used to animate Chiyoko. Hana is given some of the best comic lines in the dialogue, 'What are you doing to Dostoyevsky' he screams at Miyuki for throwing a book at Gin. The pathos of Hana's inability to have children and his rage at Sachiko's rejection of the baby attracts the viewer's sympathy. Hana's determination to find the baby's mother despite his own needs are truly heroic traits from a Japanese cultural perspective. The self is sacrificed for society's needs.

Gin is portrayed as a loser whose weakness for gambling ruins the lives of his family (see Figure 58). He tells Hana that they are dead rather than the truth that he abandoned them. In the hospital is another Gin, a hard working doctor who has genuinely lost his wife and child. This Gin is engaged to Gin's daughter. Kon presents the dark and the light of human behaviour. Yet Gin has redeeming features – he is the one who knows best how to look after the baby. In physically attacking Sachiko's husband he is also attacking his own shortcomings.



Figure 58: Gin drawn as a confused alcoholic

Miyuki lacks most of the physical features and goodness of a typical anime heroine. She has deserted her parents and stabbed her family's authority figure, her father. For much of the film she appears not to be affected by any emotion but to be out for herself. However Kon used the device of the baby to move Miyuki on from her inability to consider others. In the scene with the wife of the hit man, although neither can understand one another's language, Kon provided genuine warmth in the scene with a use of warm colours in the mise-en-scène (see Figure 59). Kon suggests at the end of the film that Miyuki will be reconciled with her parents as her father walks into the hospital.



Figure 59: Kon's use of colour: Miyuki cradles the baby / Miyuki is welcomed

The characterisation and narrative form therefore display core values of Japanese society despite the use of the Christian story as the sub-text. 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' provides an interesting example of the use of the multi-layered animetic approach in a contemporary film setting.

The techno pop soundtrack by Keniichi Suzuki was used by Kon to reinforce the feeling of an urban wasteland where the story is located. He varied this with Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' to add sentimentality to the film's emotional scenes. The result is a fast moving film which requires the attention of the viewer to catch all the nuances.

6.5.3.2 Cultural factors

In terms of genre, 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' represented a polysemous mixture of drama, melodrama, romance and comedy. Kon chose to locate the film in the Tokyo underworld. This is drawn as a dystopian world but, unlike mecha anime, it is a harsh environment which is rooted in the real world. The characters suffer alienation and rejection from 'normal' people. Satoshi Kon demonstrated the gulf between the lives of the homeless and those with a role in society. There is resolution of a sort in this film, which is not necessarily typical of anime, however this resolution is presented obliquely and off camera. In this aspect the film presents a very different style to orthodox animation.

The film adopted a common plot device for the dramatic genre, that of the use of coincidences. This is well established in live action cinema although a novel convention for animation. Kon adopted two variations of its use. Firstly as an event, for example, Gin's identification of the tramp's photograph; and also as a reunion, for example, Gin's reunion with his daughter. The inclusion of each character part adds to the progression of the story – however surreal.

The iconography of events and objects demonstrated a modern Japan which blends different cultural influences. Kon placed the events of the film between 24th December and New Year which enabled him to reference Christian, Buddhist and Shinto symbolism for rebirth and renewal. The visual signifiers also represented Kon's personal influences, for example, his interest in gaming. In the scene where Gin attacked by thugs, the lights in the houses above him go out one by one, mimicking the energy levels of characters in a computer game.

Yet, as already observed, within the dreary Tokyo underworld, Kon used dialogue to

provide comic effect. When a drunk and beaten Gin appears to see the Christmas angel, she berates him in a foul mouthed tirade. Even the animation comedy conventions are observed – when Hana runs into a door, the collision is shown as a star on screen. The comedy counterbalances the sentimentality of the plot line. These are not noble characters on a quest. Although their basic humanity is never lost, all the characters demonstrate failings and their best efforts usually end in failure, which turns into heroic action for the final scenes.

Once again, Kon demonstrated a use of 'Jo-ha-kyu' as the action builds. The frenetic car chases build the action to the film's climax as Hana and the baby fall from the top of the building. Yet the end of the film is reflective and satisfying from the perspective of closing the 'enso' or circle of enlightenment for Zen Buddhism. The three have done the best they could, as imperfect beings. This provided Kon with an opportunity to reward them in a material way with a winning lottery ticket as this is the modern world where material things matter.

6.5.3.3 Animation techniques

Kon's depiction of Tokyo demonstrated conventional elements of hyper-realism. The narrative is however progressed against the characteristic flat two dimensional background found in anime. The urban landscape is a fundamental element in the film's visual aesthetic. Kon's contribution to the film included five hundred pages of storyboards. The extent to which Kon reproduced real landscapes invited comment on the use of animation rather than live action cinema for the film. However the ability to move the action rapidly, particularly the final car chases and the dramatic climax, was facilitated by animation. In

these scenes, Kon reverted to classic animation style, to enable his characters to chase Sachiko and the baby at break neck speed. Kon continued with the technique adopted in his previous two films of a rapid transition of shots to maintain the speed of the action throughout the film. The use of this device appears to be less as an attempt to disconcert the viewer, as in his two previous films, more as a plot device to explain the motivation of the three main characters.

The evidence for the multi-layering which forms one of the main elements of difference for my premise is evidenced in Kon's depiction of the surface layer of the story, characters find baby, characters give baby to mother, characters realise their mistake, characters retrieve baby. Underneath is the layer of the Tokyo underworld which exists out of the sight of ordinary society. Kon then adds the emotional journey of redemption and facing adversity (the heroic trait representative of Japanese cultural tradition) of the three main characters.

Kon also used the medium to present an exaggerated re-telling of the story. Characters are able to say or do anything without the limitations of real world filming. This freedom of expression can be seen in Hana's over the top emotional response to events. Kon is able to use it for both comic and dramatic effect. Unlike a similar style in orthodox animation, the multi-layered approach adds depth to the characterisation. Viewers are left in no doubt that Hana, Gin and Miyuki will not give up despite all their associated problems.

6.5.4 'Paprika', 2006

For his final feature film, Kon adapted another novel, 'The Theft of the DC-mini' by Yasutaka Tsutsui. Whereas in previous films Kon viewed fantasy and reality through the minds of the characters, in *Paprika* dreams takeover reality. The entire film demonstrated Napier's (2005) 'festival' anime theme derived from Bakhtin (1965). In '*Paprika*', Bakhtin's 'carnival', where social order is subverted, is displayed as a colourful circus on parade. In the opening scene, the clown announces 'it's the greatest show time!' Kon's performance within a performance is even more surreal than usual.

Kon was also fortunate in that Madhouse Inc. was growing as a company in 2001 which ensured that he was able to maintain his existing team of animators for the film. Echoing the approach of fellow director, Hayao Miyazaki, Kon completed the drawings for the storyboards before completing the script. As a result, the dialogue did not attempt to explain the visualisation but provided clues for the viewer in trying to rationalise the relationships between the 'real' characters and their dream alter egos. The plot revolved around the theft of three devices which allow doctors to enter patients' dreams and consequently cure mental illness. People begin to experience waking dreams and it is no longer clear what is real and what is 'dream time'.

Dr Atsuko Chiba and her colleague, Dr Kosaku Tokita try to find the devices, aided by a detective, Konakawa. They are forced to enter others' dreams to find the person who is causing people to have waking dreams. In the dream world, Dr Chiba has an alter ego, *Paprika*. For once, Kon creates a recognisable anime heroine with attractive features and aggressive personality. Satoshi Kon's signature motifs reappear, a duality of personality for an individual character, the merging of reality and illusion, the exploration of heroic

behaviour traits and the flawed relationship between humans and technology. Kon created a wildly surreal landscape which required a high quality production process. Paprika provided Kon with the opportunity to fully establish his auteurship. It was a both a personal, and a tragedy for Japanese film tradition, that this was his final creative work.

6.5.4.1 Content analysis

The film challenges the viewer even more than Kon's previous films in following a fractured narrative and complex characterisation. The medium of animation enabled Kon to visualise bizarre dreams blurring into an impossible reality, a process which would be difficult to achieve with live action. The iconography of the film is set in a recognisable Japanese context even though Kon also borrowed from Western film culture. The film challenged the conventional boundaries of animation, and in doing so, I suggest demonstrated that anime has become a different cinematic form from orthodox Hollywood animation.

The opening credits introduce Detective Konakawa, a middle aged policeman who appears to be making an arrest in a circus ring surrounded by doubles of himself. He is rescued by a red haired girl and the circus disappears. The two characters run through a series of film clichés, including Tarzan and Jane, before Konakawa shoots a man in a hotel corridor (see Figure 60). The corridor distorts into psychedelic nothingness and Konakawa wakes in bed with the girl, Paprika, taking headphones from his ears. She explains that the device, the DC-mini, allows her to share his dream. But this is still a dream, and in the opening credits, Paprika flies through the sky into billboards and computer screens, transfers to a t-shirt and the side of a van in a seamless sequence. Once again, in the

establishing scenes, Kon misleads the viewer with a plot which is not the main narrative – another story within a story.



Figure 60: Detective Konakawa runs down the distorting corridor

Kon abruptly replaces Paprika flying with her hair loose (using Miyazaki's trademark metaphor for freedom) with Dr Atsuko Chiba, repressed, cool with her dark hair tightly bound in a bun driving her car. The duality of personality is clear from the start (see Figure 61). Dr Chiba become the free spirit, Paprika, in her dream world but in the 'real' world she is a hard working scientist who researches the use of technology to heal patients' psyche. The dichotomy between the voice of science and the voice of the emotions is personified by Chiba/Paprika. This relationship mirrors the sub-text of the film - the relationship between technology and the human psyche.

Chiba arrives at her office to find that three of the DC-mini devices have been stolen, probably by one of the staff. Her fat, child-like colleague Dr Kosaku Tokita is the genius who created the device. He is cast as a typical nerd and is first introduced to the audience stuck in a lift. Chiba contacts another colleague, Toratara Shima, to warn him about the theft. The head of the research institute, Inui, an older man in a wheelchair,

warns them that violence will happen. Suddenly Shima appears to have a breakdown, speaking rubbish, he throws himself out of the window. Entering his mind, Tokita and Chiba see that it has been taken over by someone else's dream.



Figure 61: Dr Chiba sees her dream persona Paprika in her reflection

A surreal carnival of objects, cultural icons, toys and weird creatures is taking Shima on a throne through a desert (see Figure 62). A doll in the carnival suddenly morphs into the face of Tokita's assistant Himuro. This clue takes Chiba, Tokita and another colleague, the handsome Osanai, to Himuro's flat where there are hundreds of dolls.



Figure 62: The dream carnival invades reality

Chiba is not dreaming but when she looks out she sees a playground with the Himuro doll behind the fence. As she steps over the fence she is stopped by Osani. When she looks again, she is climbing over the balcony of Himuro's flat twenty stories up. The

camera cuts to Shima's dream where the carnival is in a forest. Paprika appears and cuddles up to Shima. Her body sinks into his and he swells up until he explodes and wakes with Chiba beside him. Kon is developing the waking dream where illusion meets reality.

In the next scene, Detective Konakawa is at the scene of a murder. The victim is the man in his dream. He logs onto a website, Radio Club, given to him by Paprika. The two virtual barmen are voiced by Kon and the author, Tsutsui. Konakawa finds himself sinking into the screen where he sits in the club talking to Paprika. Paprika invites Konakawa to tell her about the films he enjoys. She takes him to an empty film set. He denies that he likes films (even though at the start of the film, he runs with Paprika through famous film clips) and the set darkens.

Kon cuts to the institute where two more of the staff are experiencing walking dreams. Chiba and Tokita visit an amusement park which Tokita visited as a child. They find the Himuro doll, then Himuro falls down in front of them, having jumped off the big wheel. His head appears to have the DC-mini headphones moving under the skin and he is unable to wake up. Konakawa interviews Tokita and meets Chiba whom he realises is also Paprika. The tension is rising as Chiba and her colleagues try and find the missing devices. Chiba blames Tokita for the crisis as the inventor of the device. He tries to enter Himuro's dream and finds he is a robot in the carnival procession. The carnival moves on and enters Konakawa's dream where the detective and Paprika see Tokita as a robot. At the lab, Chiba tries to wake Himuro and Tokita without success. She uses the device to enter Himuro's mind as Paprika and finds Himuro is an empty husk, the dream has consumed him. She also sees an enormous version of Inui and realises that he is the

traitor.

Shima and Chiba go to confront Inui in his house. Chiba accuses him of stealing the devices. Kon then gives the audience a shock. He cuts to a shot of Shima trying to wake Chiba from her attempt to enter Himuro's mind. She is still dreaming when she confronts Inui. Paprika is chased through gestalt dreams by Osanai who is working for Inui. She finds herself pinned to a board in a museum like a butterfly with Osanai looming over her. Konakawa is drinking in the Radio Club. He confesses that his phobia about films is because he pulled out of making a film with a friend who later died. His friend's spirit takes him to a cinema showing a film, Paprika. He sees Paprika on the screen being molested by Osanai who tears off Paprika's face showing Chiba underneath. Inui appears in Osanai's body. He tries to kill Chiba. Konakawa has an opportunity to play the hero at last, He runs into the screen and saves Chiba then runs into his own dream where he kills Osanai watched by the cinema audience.

Chiba wakes but the dreams have now invaded reality. The carnival marches through Tokyo with Tokita still a giant robot. Chiba tries to help him and he swallows her. As dreams and reality are now merged Paprika exists alongside Chiba. Inui's house has become an abyss between reality and illusion and as Inui rises as a giant, Paprika confronts him. She starts to consume him and grows like an enormous baby. Both of them fade away leaving Chiba to wake. Konakawa sits in the Radio Club where Paprika has left a message recommending him to see a film, 'Dreaming Kids' and that Chiba and Tokita are engaged. Konakawa has the last line as he asks the cinema attendant for a ticket, one adult.

Kon's narrative for Paprika deliberately mixed reality and illusion. In his previous

films, Kon provided a layered approach which disentangled the fantastical and the real. For *Paprika*, Kon also layers the narrative but illusion and the real world are in the same layer. Chiba and *Paprika* exist together on the same plane. 'Mono no aware' is present in a theme of loss from the misuse of technology. A potentially good use of technology – to heal minds is subverted to destroy them. Dreams which should be safe spaces where individuals can retreat to are invaded by reality. However the narrative is also a triumph of good over evil in the conventional sense. Konakawa overcomes his fears and gets to act the James Bond hero he would like to be. The overweight nerd gets the heroine and the villain are not only beaten but consumed by a feminine psyche, the revenge of the abused heroine. The narrative is more superficial than in his previous films – it is the skill of the visualisation which delivers the story such as it is.

The characterisation also provided Kon with opportunities to explore his fascination with representations of reality and fantasy. In '*Paprika*', the duality between Chiba and *Paprika* is a core element of the narrative unlike Mima's delusions in '*Parfektu Buru*'. *Paprika*'s freedom is an expression of Chiba's sub-conscious as she conforms with her expected role in the real world. The tension exists between the restrained standard of behaviour expected in the external 'soto' world and her exuberance in her 'uchi', inner world, where she can fly, flirt and demonstrate her strength and power over men, ultimately consuming Inui. Chiba struggles to reconcile her two personae as reality unravels and both can co-exist. This is the ultimate Japanese social nightmare where established order over natural chaos breaks down. Yet Chiba's characterisation is portrayed by Kon as a triumph as she achieves her sub-conscious desires. Her future lies with the nerd, her intellectual equal and her inferior in that he adores her (shades of the idol-fan relationship in his

previous films).

The male characters also demonstrate an outer social shell which breaks down in the dream world. Konakawa, the outwardly tough policeman has inner fears of failure and inadequacy. Only in his dream world does he become the hero and when the dream world invades reality, can he acquire the self-confidence to be his true self. Similarly the fat nerd Tokita is unable to convince Chiba of his love for her. Chiba needs to be able to interact with Tokita in the dream world before realising that he is her ideal partner. The initial scenes suggest that Chiba will choose either Konakawa or the handsome Osanai for her hero. Both have the required hero traits for animation heroes. Osanai turns out to be a corrupt villain (shades of the Marco – Curtis relationship in Miyazaki's 'Kurenai no Buta') who Konakawa kills to save Paprika. Duality of character is also demonstrated by the main villain, Inui who outwardly represents the respectable elderly and wise man. However in the dream world he subverts his responsibilities to heal patients with a desire to protect the invention. Kon's clear message is that, for Inui, technology is more important than humans.

The Internet is used by Kon as a motif for illusion. In the character of Himuro, he articulated Azuma's database animal, withdrawing from society. Himuro's flat is portrayed as a stereotypical otaku space, full of manga, posters, robot and dolls. Here is the fear of Japanese society that otaku prefer to live in the fantasy of the virtual world than engage with the real world. On the other hand, Tokita attempts to distinguish himself from his assistant Himuro, 'at least I'm not as bad as Himuro'. Tokita is immature and makes mistakes, 'morals, responsibility, I really don't get that adult stuff...' However as the scientist he needs to engage with reality and realise the impact of his work. This duality distances Kon from Azuma's hypothesis. It is possible for otaku to have a positive impact,

but only if they face up to their social responsibilities. In the end Tokita chooses the real life Chiba not Paprika, the girl of his dreams. The symbolic significance of marriage, underlines Tokita's commitment to society.

For my premise, evidence of complex characterisation in a layered narrative suggests the deviance of anime from orthodox animation's norms. Although Kon's narrative for Paprika breaks down under the need to visualise merging alternative realities, Paprika still demonstrates the duality of characterisation so representative of Japanese aesthetics. His borrowing of Western film clichés continued his use of Hollywood iconography to represent another dream world in his growing collection of alternative representations. I return to Kon's approach to the visual representation of alternate worlds in the next section.

6.5.4.2 Cultural factors

The genre elements in Paprika move beyond a typical anime sub-genre of technophobia and dystopian worlds. The DC-mini device which enables people to invade the dreams of others creates chaos and is misused by a terrorist but at the end of the film it is suggested that it will be licensed by the government. There is a fast-paced thriller element to the plot but it is the surreal depiction of walking dreams which suggests an experimental animation style (Wells, 1989). Walking fridges, sofas and microwaves are followed by trombone-playing frogs, samurai, the Venus de Milo, Godzilla, the Virgin Mary, Buddha and the Statute of Liberty. However, I suggest that Kon questioned the existence of reality in 'Paprika' from a very Japanese perspective.

In interviews Kon expressed surprise at the coding of his films as art-house. He was

clear that he made films for 'mainstream' audiences (Kon, 2007). These audiences were however Japanese not Western (I noted a similar remark by Miyazaki in Chapter 4). The Japanese viewer would appreciate the film's depiction of the Tanuki, mischievous raccoon spirits, with their enormous testicles and traditional sake bottles (representing virtue). The Japanese viewer could interpret the dancing torii, the red gates before Shinto shrines, as representative of the sacred space which represents another reality where 'hare', special events, take place. Asian folklore is also represented by Paprika's literal consumption of Inui at the film's climax. A re-working of the ancient folktale of Baku, the mythical animal who eats dreams. Paprika floats on a cloud dressed as Monkey, another mythical creature popularised by a 1970s television series. In the Radio Club, Konakawa, dressed as Kurosawa, discusses films with Paprika.

There is however a significant amount of Hollywood iconography in the film. Konakawa and Paprika depict scenes in 'Roman Holiday' (Wyler, 1953). Himuro's flat is a similar representation to the toymaker's room in '*Blade Runner*' (Scott, 1982) and Paprika's abuse by Osanai relates to scenes in '*The Silence of the Lambs*' (Demme, 1991). I suggest that Kon subverted references to both Japanese and Hollywood iconography for the same purpose, to depict dream worlds where the ordinary everyday life symbolised by 'Ke' (the vitality of things) merges with the extraordinary events experienced in 'Hare' the place where people talk to the gods. Ordinary people become extraordinary through their ability to tap into their sub-conscious or alternative state.

Using a Western analysis, this represents both a Freudian explanation of the influence of the psyche on an understanding of action and events and a reference to Baudrillard's post-modernist theories in relation to reality and illusion. Undoubtedly

'Paprika' is an interesting film to de-construct through Baudrillard's (1995) and Eco's (1990) ideas of 'hyper-reality'. The criticism of modern capitalist society as 'hyper-real' where reality is an 'illusion' reflected by modern mass media provides opportunities to read 'Paprika' as a film which depicts their fears.

However, using Japanese aesthetical perspectives, 'Paprika' can also be interpreted as reflecting the fear expressed by Zen Buddhism of chaos. 'Mujo' or impermanence is the natural order of things therefore the duty of everyone is to accept uncertainty and enjoy the moment. Konakawa's experiences in the film therefore can be interpreted as accepting the loss of his friend and enjoying viewing films once more. The carnival represents the intrusion of natural chaos into the ordered structure which people have imposed and which is, in itself, an illusion. When asked about the recurring theme of dreams and reality in an interview, Kon (2008) explained that he was attracted to the uncontrolled drama in a dream where the dreamer has no control over where the story goes. This sense of stepping into the unknown and making the best of it is a fundamental tenet of Japanese culture and Kon's characters adopt an acceptance of fate in a distinctly different approach to Hollywood animation heroes who actively work to change their fate.

Kon continues with his habit of drawing real life persona with distinctly Asian features and dream persona, in this case Paprika, with the more androgynous, large-eyed facial features of the anime heroine. When Osanai brutally removes Paprika's face the Japanese features of Chiba are superimposed underneath. The metaphor of the butterfly emerging from the chrysalis is highlighted by other references to butterflies and by the way that Paprika is pinned to the board in the museum by Osanai. Paprika hides Chiba's persona and in a reversal, Chiba releases her free self as Paprika (see Figure 63). The

reference also recalls the Chinese Taoist philosopher Zhuangzi's story of a man's dream of a butterfly who awakens not sure whether he is a man dreaming of being a butterfly or a butterfly dreaming of being a man. Is life therefore an illusion?



Figure 63: Chiba emerges from Paprika's face

The menacing atmosphere which Kon fostered through the distorting walls and seamless changes from dream world to real world is another distinctly Japanese plot mechanism. In modern Japanese social contexts, it reminds the viewer of the seductive dangers of a retreat to fantasy or the phenomenon of 'hikikomori'(withdrawal). The debate of the issues of the alienated otaku fan who finds greater satisfaction in anime and manga than engaging in Japanese life continues to be a source of social comment. The child murders of the psychopath Tsutomu Miyazaki in 1989 shocked Japan and caused extensive debate on his fascination with otaku culture. Kon linked escapism through the Internet with a retreat to dreams, 'the amount of fantasy which people are being fed through the media has become disproportionate. I believe in a balance between real life and imagination.' (Kon, 2007)

'Paprika' is therefore not a dystopian view of the world. On a surface reading there is resolution for the characters even though chaos has managed to break through and upset the 'management' of reality. Chiba and Tokita will continue to use the DC-mini for

good and Detective Konakawa has resolved his dream problems. Underneath in the sub-text, Kon warns the viewer that humans must be vigilant that hyper-reality does not become the means for natural chaos to upset the harmonious balance 'oneness' which enables society to function. This reading of Paprika addresses the known statements made by Kon on the inspirations for his creative work.

6.5.4.3 Animation techniques

'Paprika' was made with the same animation team which had previously worked with Kon. The team demonstrated the same meticulous attention to detail in the drawing of scenes and the shot placement as was found in his previous texts. CGI was used more extensively than before in his films partly due to the need for rapid seamless cuts between scenes. Magical realism is used as a device to move the characters between locations. Konakawa walks into the virtual cafe merely through clicking on a website. He does not appear to be using a DC-mini. As the film progresses Chiba morphs into Paprika at will. The animation medium certainly helped in the dream world sequences. Paprika is able to sink her body into Shima and Osanai molests her by sinking his hands into her crotch.

The flatness of the image and the layered approach to depth which I contend is characteristic of anime but not of orthodox animation is present in 'Paprika'. The camera pans across the image to emphasise the emotional state of characters. The distortion of the dream world is shown with the character starkly highlighted in the front of the screen. The colours produced by the animation reinforce the brightness and garishness of the dream world, compared to the grey colours of the research laboratory where science and

logic dominate. (Although the untidiness of Dr Tokita's room mirrors Genya's production studio in 'Sennen Joyu'). The use of ellipses ensures that the audience has to work hard to keep up, particularly as the film builds to a climax. 'Paprika' was the product of all of Kon's previous experiences in animation and, as a film, demonstrated the trademark blending of detailed story boarding with rapid animation to produce an unorthodox example of the animation genre but a classic example of anime.

6.6 Summary

Satoshi Kon's untimely death limited his completed works. However his films demonstrated a liminal trait to anime where it represents a break with the definition of orthodox animation. 'Pafekuto Buru' is a shocking film in terms of its fast and violent story and clever blending of reality and fantasy. The fact that it was also produced as an animated film extended the boundaries of animation as a medium suitable for portraying 'real' world situations. Satoshi Kon used his skill as an artist and animator to confuse as well as entertain his audience. The subject matter was particularly relevant to Japan in the 1990s when the creation of manufactured girl bands attracted debate on the manipulation and exploitation of young girls. The 'fall' of the idol and the refusal of the fan to accept that she has control over her own life provides the sub-text to Kon's treatment of the psychological thriller format.

I suggest that Kon's film demonstrates how a blend of cinematic psychological thriller, the use of Japanese aesthetics and animetic techniques pushed the boundaries for the expectation of what was possible for anime. In establishing this film as the first adult anime thriller which did not have to include stereotypical robots or extreme dystopian

societies, Kon demonstrated how an 'animetic' approach was as capable as live action cinema of exploring serious contemporary issues. In his management of reality and fantasy, I suggest, Kon exploited the medium to create a more convincing visual spectacle, literary drawing on the traditions of Japanese visual art rather than orthodox Western animation.

'Sennen Joyu' was successful in winning several Japanese film awards including in the Japan Media Arts Festival in 2001. Its distribution outside Japan was limited although it received favourable critical reviews. The significance of the film for my premise is the confirmation it provided of anime's ability to use visually distinctive techniques influenced by acknowledged tenets of Japanese aesthetics. In the case of 'Sennen Joyu', the multiple layering of themes, time periods and characterisation demonstrates Lamarre's 'radical perspectivalism' approach. The motif of the camera as an observer of history is exemplified by the watchers, Genya and Kyoji who observe Chiyoko as 'Japan' following her through symbolic representations of Japanese historical periods.

The flat two-dimensional representation used in the 'animetic' approach where the multi-layered cels enable several drawn visual representations to be amalgamated without a single point of focus (as would be the case in a live action camera shot) is also effective in 'Sennen Joyu'. The layers both confirm and undermine the narrative. Viewers can use the visualisation both to draw them into the story and to acknowledge the distortion of reality as narrative turns into fiction. The 'story within a story' develops its own logic when the animetic approach is adopted. This complexity enriches the aesthetic experience in 'Sennen Joyu' in a way which would not be found in orthodox animation.

'Tokyo Goddofazazu' was also well received at the box office in Japan as a comic

film although Kon's choice of medium was questioned for such a cinematic plot. It was awarded an Excellence award at the 2003 Japan Media Arts Festival which focuses on technical quality. The significance of the film for this study is its complexity of plot and characterisation which is presented using a multi layered approach. The high quality of the animation, supported by hand drawn cels, demonstrated Kon's auteurship. His use of a subverted Christmas story drew attention to social questions relating to the legitimacy of the family, homelessness and the place of trans-gender people in Japan. All these issues had not previously been included in mainstream anime films let alone in orthodox animation.

The clever subversion of the Christmas story and his acknowledgement of the social pressures on individuals who are different in contemporary Japanese society ensures that 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' is an interesting example of the development of anime beyond its prime genres.

'Paprika' was well received at the Venice Film Festival where it received its premiere in 2006. It was also screened at the New York Film Festival. Reviews in Japan were very positive with several awards given at the Tokyo Anime Awards 2006 and the Tokyo International Anime Festival 2007. It only received a limited release outside Japan and some American film critics compared it unfavourably to 'Sen to Chihiro no Kamikakushi' (Miyazaki, 2001), particularly for the lack of a strong plot. The film director Christopher Nolan cited the film as an influence on the use of lucid dreams in his live action work, '*Inception*' (Nolan, 2010).

I suggest that the particular context for 'Paprika' can be read more clearly from a Japanese perspective than a Western reading. Kon was an animation film director who

was immersed in his own culture and aesthetics. The social context of post-war Japan inspired his plots and his subversion of texts (as shown in 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' where the plot motif is re-worked from the original Western motif). His fascination with the use of animation to depict reality and illusion and the spaces between were creatively developed in all of his four films. Although in a very different context to Miyazaki, Satoshi Kon also demonstrated an 'animetic' approach to animation. This was best summarised by Kon himself,

'The Japanese comic and animation culture is and has been built on the experience, mindset and nuances of the Japanese people; therefore someone who does not have that mindset can not create the same thing.' (Kon, 2004)

Chapter 7 Other Worlds, Mamoru Oshii (1951 -)

'I wonder where will I go now? The net is vast and indefinite'. (Motoko Kusanagi, 'Kokaku Kidotai', Oshii, 1989)

7.1 Defining the Evidence

The films of director Mamoru Oshii provides an opportunity to examine the relationship between the 'animetic' approach and 'cinematism' in greater detail. Oshii moved between animation and live action films with what Toshiya (2005) described as an animation of physical bodies and an embodiment of animation characters. From this perspective Oshii challenged orthodox definitions of animation and raises interesting questions about the characteristics I have previously identified which denote anime as a new genre (animation form, cultural factors and authorship). His long career in the Japanese film industry provides opportunities to view the development of his approach and style during an influential period for anime from the 1990s to the twenty first century.

In Chapter 5, I proposed that Miyazaki's works provided evidence for Lamarre's 'radical perspectivalism' framework which describes an alternative perspective for anime. This perspective proposes an animation form which challenges the relationship of the conventional Cartesian single point of reference with the development of the moving image. Miyazaki's personalised use of the multiplane camera enables separate drawing layers which maintain their own integrity as the camera pans across the image.

Mamoru Oshii's visual framing style also demonstrates this multi-layered approach, particularly in the framing of a flat 2-D foreground with an accompanying CGI 3-D space. Anime's extensive use of live action cinematic shots, particularly close ups, to address the restrictions of limited animation is also a feature of Oshii's work. I will discuss the evidence

for Oshii's compliance with Lamarre's technical paradigm for anime later in this Chapter.

Oshii's works specifically provide an opportunity to explore the inter-medial quality of anime. One of the primary characteristics which, I propose, has moved anime beyond the boundaries of orthodox animation. The significance of his work in various media, animation, live action cinema, manga, computer games and novels, has been recognised both within Japan and internationally (two of his films have been entered for the Cannes Film Festival). From the perspective of content development, his development of the cyberpunk sub-genre again demonstrates anime's ability to 'de-assure' (Napier, 2005) in contrast to the 'reassurance' of orthodox Hollywood animation. Anime's symbiotic relationship with technology, both in its content and media format has been extensively exploited by Oshii in developing films, DVDs, Blu-ray and computer games.

'The reason that I have been able to continue my career is this high 'convert-ability' amongst Japanese anime fans. In other words, I received royalties each time which often supported me when I had a scarcity of work.' (Oshii, quoted in Wada-Marciano, 2012, 83.)

Another characteristic which this study proposes demonstrates anime's development as a novel cinematic form, the influence of Japanese cultural aesthetics and iconography, is an interesting aspect of Oshii's films. Oshii himself has debated the extent of the 'Japanese-ness' of his work. In interviews he appears to be ambivalent in being described as an inherently Japanese film director. This aspect will be further explored in this Chapter in the context of his film 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (1995).

The paradigm represented by Lamarre (2009) which attempts to decouple anime from a purely cultural reading as a 'Japanese' form is also relevant in any analysis of Oshii's films. My premise for this study adopts Lamarre's hypothesis but disputes that it

represents a sufficiently holistic explanation of anime's place in cinematic tradition. Mamoru Oshii, as a contemporary of Hayao Miyazaki and as equally influential a film director as Satoshi Kon, represents a very different outlook on anime. I consider that this demonstrates the complexity of anime as a cinematic form. Oshii tackles difficult themes using a reflective use of dialogue and complex narratives. His auteurship is defined by the iteration between his work and his trans-medial audiences, including live action cinema directors such as the Wachowski brothers. I examine Oshii's use of 'super-live-mation' as a new motif for depicting reality in this Chapter. Despite his apparent reluctance to join the mainstream, I argue that Mamoru Oshii's creative works demonstrate similar characteristics to Miyazaki and Kon which move anime beyond the orthodox animation paradigm.

7.2 Mamoru Oshii's approach to animation

Oshii's youth in Tokyo was marked by two main influences. A love for cinema instilled in him by his father who often smuggled him into cinemas and a growing political activism and participation in 'anti-establishment rallies and demonstrations' (Ruh 2004: 4). In many of the interviews surrounding the release of his live action film, 'Abaron' *Avalon* (2001), as well as in relation to other releases, Oshii stressed the influence on his work of involvement in student and revolutionary movements (Rougier, 2002).

His early career mirrored that of Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata. Mamoru Oshii developed his creative skills through working in anime studios as an animator. Following university in Tokyo, in 1977 he began work at Tatsunoko Productions where he worked on many anime. Oshii's success began as a director of two films based on the popular comic

anime television series, 'Urusei Yatsura' (1981-84). The establishment of Headgear Studios provided Oshii with a consistent production team. Most of his films have film scores by Kenji Kawai and scripts by Kazunori Ito. The partnership with Ito Chihiro as the script writer for 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers* (2008) represented a change in direction for Oshii as Ito was an experienced adapter of printed novels for the screen. This use of a small number of people for the production team has resulted in a distinctive filmic style demonstrated by the influential series, 'Patlabor' (1988-1993) which appeared as a television series, OVA and cinematic films. As Japan slid in a prolonged economic depression during the late 1980s, Oshii's films depicted a dystopian country where severe social challenges were overcome by technological change.

'Patlabor' was followed by his first international success, the feature film 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) which was initially not well received by Japanese audiences, but which became an influential work internationally. Oshii had previously experimented with live action cinema and his next major film, 'Abaron' *Avalon* (2001) was a mixture of live action framed in an anime style and shot in Poland. He followed this with a well-received sequel to 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), 'Kokaku Kidotai: Inosens' *Ghost in the Shell: Innocence* (2004) which was able to use the technological advances of CGI unavailable in 1995. Oshii's later film 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers* (2008) took his dystopian landscapes into an alternative world history. The film was developed alongside a manga series and computer game demonstrating the increasingly trans-medial production processes used by contemporary anime studios.

Oshii's adoption of visual animation conventions in his live action films such as *Abaron Avalon* (Oshii, 2001) suggests a fundamental world view where reality is perceived

as a structured schema. From this perspective animation reflects physical reality rather than being an alternative interpretation of reality. (Toshiya, 2005). The starting point is therefore that, for Oshii, animation should dominate cinematism rather than imitate it (as demonstrated by the works of Miyazaki and Kon). Physical reality can be effectively interpreted and displayed in any filmic form through adopting a structured approach to the recording of the movement of images.

In an interview included with the *Abaron/Avalon* DVD, Oshii spoke of his admiration for the technical approach used by Alfred Hitchcock and Jean Luc Godard (his use of literary texts as an aesthetic device is derived from a similar use by Godard in films such as '*A Bout de Souffle*', 1950). Oshii's films reflect a darkness which suggests the early influence of science fiction writers such as J.G. Ballard and Robert Heinlein on his thinking (Ruh, 2004). The influence of European authors on his creative work mirrors the experience of Hayao Miyazaki who also looked beyond Japan for inspiration in his early films. The resulting works provide the opportunities to seek evidence for my premise that anime is truly representative of an uniquely Japanese film genre, where external influences are subverted through a particular Japanese 'gaze'.

Of particular interest to this study is Oshii's willingness to explore fundamental human conditions which provide a distinct style and depth to his animated films. Once again, the blurring of boundaries is a constant theme – between reality and hyper-reality, between body and mind, between technology and humanity, uniqueness and identity. From a Western perspective, it is possible to associate Darwin's theory of natural selection with Oshii's narratives and dialogue, for example the potential for humans to develop into cyborgs. His work can also be interpreted as an example of Cartesian duality. However

from a Japanese cultural perspective, natural development results in different beings which co-exist rather than a hierarchic structure with the human race as the most advanced species (Imanishi, 2002). Instead of a linear development, the 'superflat' perspective allows different entities to exist within one world view, each with its own integrity. As with layered images, so with realities – from this perspective Oshii asks the empirical questions, what is real, what defines humanity, how will technology change what it is to be human?

Oshii's evolutionary view of the relationship between humans and technology therefore contrasted with the view expressed in another influential anime film, Katsuhiro Otomo's film 'AKIRA' (1988) where technology is something to be feared and resisted. The Japanese fear of large consortia which developed during the bubble economy of the 1980s and their influence on individual lives is reflected in Otomo's film. This viewpoint had been replaced in Oshii's films by an acceptance of the inevitability of technological advance.

In films such as Kokaku Kidotai *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), Oshii challenged the Cartesian perspective of the division of body and soul. If humans have no souls, it follows that cyborgs can perfectly replicate humans. In his world view this lack of duality forms the central question, do cyborgs have souls? Is the cyborg the next stage in human evolution where the organic body is no longer needed because the mind can exist within a freeform data network? What is the relationship between the body and what Oshii refers to as the 'ghost'?

Oshii is also concerned with other boundaries apart from that between humans and technology. His exploration of the changing perceptions of Japanese history after the Second World War can be interpreted using Azuma's database model. Using this

interpretation, as the modernist 'grand narrative' of prosperity and growth was destroyed, the resulting disillusionment encouraged more individual narratives which were reflected in the work of the post-war Japanese film auteurs. This post-modernist response by Japanese film directors is mirrored by the growing otaku interest in subverting original anime to create new personal narratives. The growth of Comiket in Tokyo as a major convention of 'dojinshi' or user-generated anime demonstrates the ability of anime to stimulate an iteration with the original creators. Over half a million people attended the 2012 Comiket with associated cosplay and manga events. Oshii's otaku fans have created parodies of his original anime which are sometimes difficult to distinguish from the original. This blurring of the boundaries between original and copy has similarities with Baudrillard's (1994) views on the use of simulacra as simulations of reality. However in Oshii's case, the iteration with otaku fans is better described in terms of 'gamic realism' (Azuma, 2007) where interaction has replaced the passive consumption of films by audiences. This post-modern interactive cultural context replaces the former unified Japanese 'grand narrative'. The fragmentation of what is 'real' or 'original' is magnified in virtual environments where representations may be unstable depending on the global nature of their dissemination. This inference links back to ideas of 'glocalisation' and the influences on anime beyond Japan.

Oshii's view is that Japanese artists use a physical representation of Western features instead of 'realistic' Japanese features to represent an 'ideal'. Oshii's animation follows this convention. I have already discussed 'mukokuseki', literally lacking nationality, but it 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, 2002: 28). Oshii

has always had a complicated relationship with his native country – he has stated that, although he lives in Japan, he is detached from it and is more comfortable working in 'borderline cinema' where realities collide. 'I want to make films that explore these spaces in time and these characters who are nowhere and somewhere at the same time' (Oshii, 2002). However many of Oshii's visual metaphors are based on Japanese cultural iconography and I will return to these influences on his work when interpreting individual texts.

The identification of Oshii's films as part of a new cinematic form which is based on a specific sense of 'Japanese-ness' draws on an interpretation of genre which focuses on how genre is defined and generally used by audiences (Mittel, 2004). This builds on Altman's (1999) analysis of genre as emerging as much from cultural discourse as from textual properties. Oshii's exploration of the interactive relationships between humans and technology is mirrored by anime audience's interaction with the Internet in shaping views and attitudes. Thus it can be argued that anime emerges as an interactive and novel form through the processes of definition, interpretation, and evaluation. Otaku fans, Azuma's 'database animals' (Azuma, 2009) through their creation of 'simulacra' and their extensive discourse help to shape the 'form' of anime and, I suggest, maintains anime's Japanese-ness as a cultural discourse. This explanation is in line with Mittel's (2001) paradigm that genres, while in a state of constant change due to the intervention of audiences, have a sense of stability when being considered by specific audiences.

Oshii's anime also follows the conventions used by Miyazaki and Kon of layering the image, particularly to establish depth in 2-D drawings. His layering is also evident in his experiments in different forms for his anime texts, for example video games. Arguably both

within Japan and transnationally, Oshii's works therefore provide a complexity and a richness of detail which stimulates debate on the depiction of reality by animation both with and without real world referents.

7.3 The development of Oshii's auteurship

Oshii's auteurship directly relates to his individual style, his willingness to innovate in a digital age and the challenging quality of his animation. His admiration for his fellow director Hayao Miyazaki is respectful but muted. Oshii has referred in interviews to Studio Ghibli as a Japanese 'Kremlin' with Miyazaki too driven by ideological issues and a social sense of working for the common good (Tze-Yue, 2010). Oshii's version of the science fiction sub-genre emphasises apocalyptic landscapes, surveillance by the state, alternative realities, myths and cyborgs. It is a darker vision than Miyazaki's optimism for the future.

Oshii defined his experiments with live action cinema as 'super-live-mation'. Abaron *Avalon* (2001) was a complex mixture of video gaming and live cinema grounded in Japanese aesthetics, with a plot based on Celtic myth depicted in a Polish landscape. Oshii's use of a 2-D flat foreground was augmented by the use of 3-D CGI space. His actors were framed as if characters in an anime film. This signature style emerged in the 1980s and many subsequent elements were used in a surreal animation, 'Tenshi no Tamago' *Angel's Egg* (1985). The film, which lasts 71 minutes, unusually for Oshii only contains four minutes of dialogue, mostly a warrior and a young girl saying repeatedly to one another, who are you? The warrior and the girl travel through a devastated city, the girl apparently protecting an egg.

The arrangement of long slow takes with intermittent quick montage scenes

provided a rhythm which Oshii also adopted in subsequent films. The result is to move the viewer between action and in-action, mirroring a sense of moving between dreams and reality. Occasionally the narrative moved forward but Oshii used these montage scenes to dramatise the internal transformation of his characters, for example Major Kusanagi in Kokaku Kidotai *Ghost in the Shell* (1995). The introspection of the main characters was highlighted by placing the light at the sides of the screen, framing the animated characters in relief on the screen. The subdued colours used for the landscape provided a somber background which adds to the visual style which Oshii developed for his cyberpunk films. The introspection and reflection of the characters is physically reproduced in the drawings through images of mirrors and water. This use of Eastern aesthetics has been compared to a new model of anime in a digital environment through comparing Oshii's work with Chinese animation and a Japanese computer game (Chow, 2012).

In the next section I will examine the evidence from selected examples of Oshii's creative work for my premise that anime represents a new animation form, subverting elements of Wells' paradigm for animation with an innate Japanese aesthetic form and cultural content. In the selection of Oshii's works, I have taken examples of his films at three major developmental points in his career beginning with 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* (1993), followed by 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) and finally 'Sukai Korora' *The Sky Crawlers* (2008). The first two films represent a clarification of his world view whereas 'Sukai Korora' provides an opportunity to examine Oshii's approach to extending the conventional use of the mecha sub-genre.

7.4 The evidence from selected works

7.4.1 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* (1993)

'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* was the second feature film version of a successful television franchise which began in 1984. It is an interesting example of how Oshii subverted the existing mecha anime sub-genre of the 1980s which focused on the relationships between giant mechanical robots and their human pilots. He was far more interested in dramatising the main political issues of the time in Japan and his plot moved mecha anime beyond its formulaic conventions. This evolutionary development of sub-genre boundaries is less marked in orthodox animation where sub-genre boundaries typically perpetuate existing understanding of the differences between the sub-genres.

7.4.1.1 Content analysis

Oshii's trademark juxtaposition of action scenes with long reflective dialogue scenes characterised the structure of 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2*. The intensity of the dialogue between characters is more reminiscent of a psychological thriller than that of mecha anime. This individualistic approach provides a clear contrast to the formulaic linear development of orthodox animation. Oshii appears determined to provide an allegory of Japanese history and social attitudes through his plot and characterisation.

Two security policemen, Goto and Nagumo, start a search for Tsuge, a rogue soldier suspected of terrorist attacks. They are distracted by an order to surround a JSDF base (the Japanese Self Defence Force – JSDF, in effect the Japanese national army). The exercise ends in a stand-off due to the incompetence of the politicians. Tsuge's rogue unit attack Tokyo and, as a consequence, Goto and Nagumo ignore orders and form a

paramilitary unit to oppose him. The struggle between opposing military standpoints is subverted by the civil servants who capture Goto and Nagumo but fail to capture Tsuge.

Goto and Nagumo escape and resume their illegal pursuit of Tsuge. The plot ends with Tsuge a prisoner but the fate of Goto and Nagumo remains unclear. This lack of resolution resonates with similar motifs adopted by Miyazaki and Kon. In framing the plot line Oshii used the contention in Japanese society post-1945 on military issues. The refusal of the occupying American forces to allow any expression of militarism, such as the samurai bushido tradition, in case that this led to renewed Japanese extreme nationalism frustrated elements of political and popular thought.

However the trauma of the two nuclear bombs dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945 also deeply influenced social attitudes towards the horrors of war and an ambivalent attitude towards the military. Through the film, Oshii appeared to be challenging his fellow citizens to accept that Japanese history and culture were fundamentally shaped by conflict and violence. The refusal of the non-military characters in 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' to engage in violence is in itself a denial of the real world where violence is a fact of life. Goto and Nagumo represent the legitimacy of force as a means of resolution even if it is not sanctioned by the civil authorities.

Oshii framed his characters against a winter landscape, a device which has echoes of Satoshi Kon's film 'Sennen Joyu' *Millennium Actress* (2001) where landscape is used to visualise past relationships. As with Kon's visualisation, Oshii adapted an actual historical occurrence. The encounter between Tsuge and a former lover, Shinobu referenced an incident of 26th February 1936, 'Ni ten niroku jiken', when soldiers of the Imperial Army rebelled and briefly took over Tokyo. The rebellion was sparked by corruption in

government and the extreme poverty of the rural poor. The incident reinforced Oshii's theme of civil corruption and the need for 'lawless' forces to address the situation for the 'common good'.

Oshii adopted a similar visual device for the first 'Patlabor' film (1989) in a sequence where Detective Matsui walked around Tokyo looking for signs of a terrorist in hiding, Detective Matsui observed that many traditional old houses had been abandoned due to Dr Hobba's single-minded destruction of old Tokyo. The symbolism of a nostalgia for the past emphasised the lack of hope for the future. Oshii's attitude towards the past contrasts with Miyazaki's work, but both of them are looking at the past to shape the future. Unlike Oshii, Miyazaki is content to frame his nostalgia within a positive context as was shown in 'Tonari no Totoro' *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988).

The characters representing the military and police are in conflict with the civil authorities and politicians. Oshii used the individual characters to demonstrate the subtle differences between the signifiers for power, the uniformed services and acknowledged processes of law and the actual holders of power, the anonymous suited politicians and civil servants. The sophistication of his plot motifs and narrative demonstrated the significant distance which 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* moved anime beyond existing formulaic conventions for sci-fi sub-genres. It therefore represented an early example of Oshii's importance in shaping contemporary anime.

7.4.1.2 Cultural factors

If anime represents a new animation form which is fundamentally influenced by Japanese aesthetics, 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* is an interesting object of study.

The well-established characteristics of mecha anime include the relationships between humans and super robots. Oshii interestingly interspersed the hyper-reality expressed by mecha anime with references to real life issues in contemporary Japan. This evidence for individual authorship will be further considered later in the Chapter.

The real world context for the late 1980s, early 1990s was one of uncertainty and conflict. In Europe the Berlin Wall came down in 1989 and Russia disintegrated as a nation in 1991. In 1990 there was war in the Middle East as Iraq invaded Kuwait. Within Japan, the economic boom of the 1980s collapsed. The Japanese Self Defence Force – JSDF, was given authority by the government to participate in UN peacekeeping missions for the first time since 1945.

This real world anxiety and uncertainty influenced the first scene of the film where a JSDF Unit of mechanised labors, or super robots, is decimated on a peacekeeping mission because the soldiers are not allowed by the UN to fire back when attacked. Their leader, Tsuge, ignores the command and survives but then cannot accept the guilt of being the survivor. This is Oshii's introduction to the duality of Japanese society. What he perceives as the complacency of the Japanese public to the reality of world affairs. In the real world, peacekeeping is a bloody business not a euphemism for disengagement from physical conflict. Tsuge begins a new life as a rogue soldier, attacking targets which exemplify his rage against the duality of Japanese politics.

Oshii wove this complexity within a superficial mecha anime plot where the massive robots, the labors piloted by humans, battle in a technological society stripped of the tactile pleasures of touch and emotion. The extension of the sub-genre boundaries are also visible in Oshii's visualisation of nostalgia. Sci-fi genres conventionally visualise the future

whereas nostalgia is typically a characteristic of historical genres. I have referred previously to Satoshi Kon's use of nostalgia as a mechanism of the relationship between memory and history - a familiar convention of Japanese aesthetics. Oshii acknowledged the power of nostalgia through what Azuma (2007) has described as the 'seikei-kei' sub-genre where world views reflect a dystopian state (see Figure 64). Unlike earlier sci-fi where the genre reflects an optimism that technology will lead to a better life, Oshii's sci-fi landscapes are dark. Nostalgia is presented as a depiction of a society which has lost faith in its future. It is nostalgic because it has no future.



Figure 64: Two examples of Oshii's use of reflection and shadow

Complexity and duality differentiates Oshii's work from the linear resolution of orthodox animation genres. There are no heroes responsible for the successful conclusion which characterises the orthodox form. The fate of Goto and Naguma, who could be compared to cinematic anti-heroes, is deliberately left uncertain. Oshii represented the new approach to mecha anime and, as such, became an influence on later animators and live action directors of sci-fi genres.

7.4.1.3 Animation techniques

Even at a relatively early stage of his career as an animator, the film demonstrated the complexity of animation technique which I propose distinguishes anime from orthodox animation. The labors' battles are animated as streams of data and visual images which de-personalise the fighting. The attack on Yokohama Bay Bridge early on in the film is animated to mimic the video live action film shot from American jets during the 1990s Gulf War. Battles reflect 'gamic reality' (Azuma, 2007) not actual physical conflict.

This framing of the conflict in simulated reality exemplifies Lamarre's referential framing of anime (see Figure 65). The duality of real warfare being represented by digital replay blurs the experience for the viewer. The duality of the framing extends to the camera angles where conventional shots are interspersed with aggressive lighting unsettling the viewer. This uncertainty in interpreting visual information is reflexive – Arakawa, a JSDF officer insists on videotape evidence in attempting to convince two policemen, Goto and Naguma, that the media have misled viewers on the facts relating to the Yokohama Bay bridge attack. Oshii developed his 'super-live-mation' technique in later films to include digital photographs in an animated sequence blurring the depiction of reality for the viewer. Wada-Marciano (2012) proposed that his technique can be linked to an ancient Japanese puppet technique where stillness and movement are linked. This willingness to experiment with new visual effects marks Oshii both as an auteur in animation terms but also in live action cinematography. His use of high quality animation story boards to develop the finished scenes are evidenced in the extensive drawings completed for the film which were reproduced as a separate CD-ROM.



Figure 65: Oshii's framing of the image influenced by Ukiyo-e

7.4.2 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* 1995

'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* brought Mamoru Oshii's work to wider attention. It provides a challenge for any researcher of animation in its complexity and refusal to conform to accepted conventions of animated representations. The film therefore is a rich source for my analysis of anime as an innovative film form. Released two years after 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba', the film demonstrated how Oshii had further developed his thinking on the dualities which characterise his work.

7.4.2.1 Content analysis

Oshii's seminal film *Kokaku Kidotai Ghost in the Shell* (1995) begins with flashing green numbers evoking data encryption which change to become the opening credits. This set the context for the film where the influence of technology fundamentally changes the human condition. In the opening sequence, Major Motoko Kusanagi, leader of a shadowy government unit Public Security Section 9, is being constructed by Megatech Body (see Figure 66). All her body parts are owned by the government, including her brain and

therefore her thoughts. This sequence introduced Oshii's underlying question for his audiences, Major Kusanagi is a cyborg, is she also human?

The film was adapted by Mamoru Oshii from a very popular manga by Masamune Shirow. Although the manga asked the difficult questions about what it means to be human, it adopted a humorous approach which is omitted by Oshii. He focused on the issues of power and control in a dystopian society where humans and cyborgs struggle with the consequences of technology which invades thoughts and controls actions. For Oshii when humans developed language and focused on mental skills, their physical bodies in effect become 'functionless' or 'cold'. The replacement of organic body parts with prosthetics is a natural evolution and therefore cyborg bodies represent a Darwinian step forward for humanity. However if human brains are replaced with cyborg brains, do they retain subjectivity, for example show emotion? For Oshii memory is the empirical reality for the human/cyborg paradox. If memory can be replicated in cyborgs then the divide disappears. This is inferred in the sequel 'Kokaku Kidotai Inosens' *Ghost in the Shell Innocence* (2004) where the cyborg dolls appear to show anger at being abandoned by humans.



Figure 66: Major Kusanagi is created, an 'exploded view' (after Lamarre, 2009)

An analysis of the film's content demonstrates a very different use of plot,

characterisation and mise-en-scène to conventional Hollywood animation. The plot of 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* follows Kusanagi and her team in tracing a cyber-hacker. They identify a rubbish lorry driver who is using an illegal program bought from a man in a bar to try and hack his estranged wife's mind to find his daughter. However the men arrested are 'ghost-hacked' or have their minds invaded by the 'Puppet Master'.

The Unit then discovers a new cyborg illegally constructed by Megatech Body through ghost-hacking with which Kusanagi decides to attempt a mind-merge. Before she can try, Unit 9 is attacked by another government agency, Unit 6, and the cyborg disappears. Oshii builds the internal tension gradually. Kusanagi realises that her Unit is being prevented by the government from knowing more about a mysterious project 2501 which involves the Puppet Master, and which may be protecting embarrassing information about the government.

As they chase two cars, Kusanagi is trapped in a museum where she fights a spider tank. Giant fossils in the museum are destroyed in the battle which also partly destroys a sign 'hominis'. Her team member and fellow cyborg, Batou, arrives to save her and Kusanagi attempts to mind merge with the cyborg. She learns that the Puppet Master was part of Project 2501, but although sentient, is unable to reproduce. It invites Kusanagi to merge so that a new stronger mind will be created. However both are destroyed by a shot from a Unit 6 helicopter and Batou loses his arm. When Kusanagi wakes up she is in a child's body – all Batou could find at short notice. Her mind is now merged with the Puppet Master.

Oshii's films are notable for his use of dialogue to articulate his personal world view. This contrasts with the limited use of dialogue by other animation genres beyond as a plot

device to move the narrative forward and explain actions. Orthodox animation would struggle with a requirement to animate scenes with extensive dialogue. A good example of this occurs in the scene where Kusanagi reflects on the nature of her being and the Puppet Master reasons with her to merge their minds. Their merger is a conscious act by both - "I am now neither the woman who was known as the Major, nor am I the program called the Puppet Master". The following speech by the Puppet Master contains Oshii's thoughts on the potential for human evolution through a merger of human/cyborg/pure data to create a new 'life' form.

"I refer to myself as an intelligent life form, because I'm sentient and I'm able to recognise my own existence. But in my present state I am still incomplete, lack the most basic life processes inherent in all living organisms: reproducing and dying But you can copy yourself. A copy is just an identical image. There is the possibility that a single virus could destroy an entire set of systems and copies do not give rise to variety and originality. Life perpetuates itself through diversity and this includes the ability to sacrifice itself when necessary." [1.09.45]

Oshii also provided a subtle use of reflexive scenes. The initial scenes of the film where Kusanagi's body is seen being assembled in the factory are mirrored by other similar scenes later in the story. As she is created in a tank of chemical liquid, her cyber floats in a similar animation and with similar camera angles to a later scene where she scuba dives in the ocean. Oshii hinted at a symbolism that Kusanagi is constantly being re-born (in line with Japanese Buddhist belief). However this re-birth is linked to her own extensive questioning of whether she exists at all.

The device of the thermoptic suit which makes the wearer more or less invisible adds to this visual representation of being a ghost, without substance. Batou is one of the few cyborgs who can see the thermoptic suits with his enhanced eyesight. The scene in the market where Batou views the 'ghost' fleeing through the busy shoppers is a good

example of Oshii's ability to animate a point of view where slow motion is interspersed with rapid character movement.

The interplay between the physical representation necessary for the hyper-real medium of animation and Oshii's fascination with the representation of the state of 'being' is exemplified by his treatment of the computer program, the Puppet Master. The 'character' is neither a physical being or cyborg. Yet the program is able to take over the minds of both humans and cyborgs, replacing their memories with artificially implanted simulated experiences, SimEx memories. Through his characterisation of the invisible 'Puppet Master', Oshii demonstrated his fear of the death of individual 'being' through the loss of personal memories. Yet he also acknowledged the difficulties posed for a 'being' with no visible reality.

This is exemplified in the scene where the Puppet Master uses a static female cyborg torso to argue its case with the heads of Section 6 and Section 9. Oshii included a dialogue between them which reinforces the materialist perspective that humans and machines both operate from a Darwinist standpoint. The puppet Master begins, 'As a sentient life form, I hereby demand political asylum'. The scientist replies, 'Is this a joke?' 'Ridiculous! It's programmed for self-preservation!' The Puppet Master responds, 'It can also be argued that DNA is nothing more than a program, designed to preserve itself.' The first scientist argues, "Nonsense! This babble offers no proof at all that you're a living, thinking life form!" The Puppet Master's final response is, 'And can you offer me proof of your existence? How can you, when neither modern science nor philosophy can explain what life is?'

Kusanagi's decision to merge with the Puppet Master, her former protagonist, forms

a pivotal moment in the delivery of the film's underlying message, the evolution of data in the information network into a form which can think for itself. The computer program seeks to acquire the essence of humanity, to be able to age and die. Kusanagi is unconvinced, she replies, 'But you can copy yourself.' This argument is a reprise of Kusanagi's own thoughts earlier in the film, when she discusses humanity with her cyborg partner, Togusa.

Oshii demonstrated the influence of Japanese social experiences in the dialogue for 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell*. The shock of the nuclear explosions in Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 1945 and the resulting distrust of weapons of mass destruction colour Oshii's creative work. Humanity is losing its ability to control technology resulting in dystopian landscapes. The benefits of information networking are countered by the abilities for mind control which the Puppet Master demonstrates using the same network. As with the atomic bomb in 1945, it is not possible for Japan to revert to a more innocent past. This bleak perspective is in stark contrast with the content expressed in Hollywood animation where the medium largely ignores the consequences of real life experiences in its dialogue and plots. I propose that 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* marks an important stage in the modern development of anime as a new animation form, sophisticated in its structure and characterisation and technically developed as a form with strong influences from individual authors.

7.4.2.2 Cultural factors

The film developed the cyber punk sub-genre beyond the apocalyptic post-nuclear world depicted in 'AKIRA' (Otomo, 1988). It was a fusion of cyber punk, psychological thriller and science fiction. I suggest that Oshii moved the classic narrative of science

fiction anime (previously exemplified mainly by mecha anime) into a new creative space where the nature of what it is to be human underpins the action.

This discourse on the role of technology in a future social context extends beyond conventional approaches to animation. In addition, the fusion of traditional Shinto and Buddhist beliefs together with more recent Christian influences codified the film as an example of an inherently Japanese aesthetic rather than a text of orthodox animation. The Japanese Buddhist distrust of the inanimate replacing organic body parts forms part of the film's exploration of what constitutes 'humanity'. As does the core Shinto belief that all objects, both animate and inanimate possess 'spirits'. The influence of Japanese aesthetics is demonstrated in the inconclusive ending where Kusanagi accepts her new role as a merged sentient being but her colleague Batou is content with his material state as a physical cyborg (Oshii does not choose between dualism and materialism).

As with the films of Miyazaki and Kon, Oshii's interpretation of the cyberpunk sub-genre demonstrates non-Japanese influences. 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* uses a similar theme found in Fritz Lang's *'Metropolis'* (1927) where machines consume their creators. He also acknowledges Isaac Asimov's (1942) three rules of robotics – do not harm humans, always obey humans and protect yourself if that protects humans.

The cyberpunk film sub-genre was heavily influenced by Western authors such as William Gibson's novel 'Necromancer' (1984). It is interesting therefore to note the cyclical influence of the Asian technological revolution on Gibson's work. Despite this interest, as with his contemporary Hayao Miyazaki, Oshii denied that his films were intended for international consumption. 'I doubt if there's ever been a Japanese animation produced with the Western audience in mind' (Oshii quoted in Nerlich, 2000). Mirroring the work of

his peers, I propose that Oshii subverted non-Japanese influences, using an indigenous aesthetic perspective, for his own purposes. These influences add variety and richness to Oshii's world view without dominating the core Japanese aesthetic.



Figure 67: Kusanagi's body depicted as a utilitarian object

Oshii was ambivalent about the significance of the question of dualism versus materialism. In the opening sequence Major Kusanagi is naked as the camera follows her construction with the credits self reflexively associating themselves with her emergence as a cyborg (see Figure 67). There is little sexual symbolism displayed in these initial shots. Kusanagi's body is a functional form. This approach mirrored the traditional belief in 'ningho joruri', the use of inanimate bodies reliant on mechanical intervention (modernised as technological intervention) for their function. For example, the Japanese puppet theatre plays of Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653 - 1724) included puppets which pretended to be alive. Oshii includes a shot of a quote on a wall plaque from an early playwright, Zeami Noh (1363 – 1443) 'life and death come and go like puppets'. The aesthetic basis for Oshii's cyborgs also have similarities with the 'dashi karakuri ningyo' inanimate dolls used in festivals in Nagoya and Takayama.

Links with traditional Japanese Noh theatre are also found in the choice of

soundtrack. The ethereal music draws on the influence of travel songs ('michiyuki') which are common plot devices to move the narrative forward.

Oshii's role in progressing cyberpunk as a sub-genre is also novel. In addition to the conventional characteristic of the 'super body' powered by the replacement of organic body parts by prosthetics, the film explores the consequences of 'hacking' or mind control driven by social and political corruption. The dazzling action scenes found in conventional mecha anime films, where humans control their enormous robots in post-apocalyptic landscapes, are replaced by slower, dark, threatening plot lines where humans and cyborgs are both vulnerable to unscrupulous organisations. AKIRA's dystopian landscape were caused by a nuclear blast. In contrast, Oshii's Neo-Tokyo is ruled by corruption.

The focus on mind control echoed Satoshi Kon's exploration of what is reality in 'Paprika' (2006). However Oshii is more explicit in his cynicism and his contempt for large organisations. No doubt, the collapse of the Japanese economy in the 1980s provided the context for Oshii's creative inspiration where corruption at every level of government and big business was exposed by financial failures. In developing the cyberpunk sub-genre, Oshii demonstrated the ability of anime to constantly restate its genre boundaries. A trait which differentiates anime from orthodox Hollywood animation's requirement to 'assure' its audiences with more of the same.

The extension of genre boundaries is particularly seen in Oshii's construction of the relationships between Major Kusanagi, her cyborg partner Batou, and her mainly human partner, Togusa. Kusanagi transcends the stereotype of the weaker gender - her strength is superior to Togusa. Oshii therefore challenged the passive female role found in Hollywood animation. Yet Oshii also retained a human subjectivity – in an opening scene

Kusanagi receives a query about the amount of static in her brain. She responds laconically that it must be that time of the month. Although outwardly unconcerned with origins, Kusanagi is fundamentally focused about whether she possesses something that she considers to be her “ghost,” the spirit or soul that animates her being.

Togusa in contrast is almost totally human physically except for his mental telepathy and ability to connect to the data network. The organisation has no problem with destroying his physical body in an action beyond his control as long as his mental powers are retained. This lack of 'ownership' of their physical entities, both human and cyborg, emphasised Oshii's despair at the abuse of power.

When Major Kusanagi merges with the Puppet Master, Oshii outlined her new reality, 'We are more alike than you realise. We resemble each other's essence, mirror images of one another's psyche.' Kusanagi constantly sees her mirror image within a hall of mirrors reflecting to infinity. In contrast, her cyborg partner Batou explains the developments from a materialist point of view. This perspective defines reality, including the brain and mind, as being formed from solely physical matter. In the scene after a brain hack is explained, Batou comments on mental processes: "That's all it is, information. Even a simulated experience or a dream is simultaneous reality and fantasy." Kusanagi takes a different point of view. When she and Bateau go for a boat trip, she philosophises about what constitutes herself:

'There are countless ingredients that make up the human body and mind, like all the components that make up me as an individual with my own personality. Sure I have my own face and voice to distinguish myself from others, but my thoughts and memories are unique only to me and I carry a sense of my own destiny'.

This extension of the science fiction genre boundaries acknowledges the 'uncanny

valley' hypothesis (Mori, 1971) a dip in empathy where a robot is almost human but not quite. This attempt to be 'human' stimulates feelings of rejection and revulsion in human observers. Oshii also referenced Freud's (1919) description of the 'uncanny', unable to distinguish between animate and inanimate. The richness of the plot mechanisms demonstrated the distinctiveness between anime and orthodox animation. He moves between a Western interpretation such as the scene where, relaxing on a boat after diving, both Kusanagi and Batou hear a mental voice quoting from the Bible, 'For now we see through a glass darkly' (Corinthians 1), to a traditional Japanese Shinto interpretation of 'being' that any distinction between animate and inanimate is unnecessary as all forms are animate. Oshii's subversion of external influences with a specifically Japanese reading is apparent through both the narrative and characterisation of the anime.

7.4.2.3 Animation techniques

Oshii's use of montage to emphasise his character's internal turmoil is a particularly interesting example of his auteurship in terms of his use of animation. In one notable sequence, Kusanagi takes a boat journey chasing after the villain. Oshii framed thirty four shots in around two minutes, building the tension through wiping shots from Kusanagi's point of view mixed with high level shots of the Hong Kong cityscape. As the sequence plays through the montage becomes increasingly symbolic rather than linear, Oshii includes his signature iconography, reflective surfaces in the rain, mirrors, cyborg bodies, corridors blending in an emotive rather than narrative sequence. In terms of cinematography, this approach demonstrate a similarity with Yasujiro Ozu's use of 'pillow shots' (Burch, 1979) which also provided emotive rather than narrative progression.

Although the original manga was not drawn by Oshii, he had agreed with Masamune Shirow that he could adapt the drawings as he needed for the anime. This involved a considerable amount of digital composition. The Production IG studio production team were innovators in digital production – 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* was the first instance of computer generated layers projected on to a hand drawn background. The studio was also very innovative in the use of a digital storyboard (Screen Architect) which enabled multiple layers to be coloured in groups. Oshii revealed that he had experienced a profound impact on viewing the rushes, knowing that all the drawings only existed in a machine (comment in an interview with Jasper Sharp, *3-D Magazine*, 2009). This adaptation of technology to enhance the traditional hand drawn cels acknowledges the pioneering role played by Oshii in progressing anime's development as a digital medium.

7.4.3 'Sukai Kurora' *The Sky Crawlers* 2008

Oshi adapted one of Hiroshi Mori's science fiction novels for his CGI animation released in 2008 with a screenplay by Chihiro Ito. The film demonstrates how Oshii's creative development continued to move beyond the conventions of established anime sci-fi genre boundaries. The complicated plot unravels to the death of the main character or does it? Oshii works to keep the attention of his audience without conceding a tidy resolution of the story. The film was well received outside Japan, winning awards at the Toronto Film Festival in 2008 and being entered for the Leone d'Oro award at the Venice Film Festival. The accompanying Nintendo Wii computer game was also partially developed by Oshii. 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers* represented a culmination of Oshii's

status as an anime auteur, blending the use of digital animation with complex characterisation and plot, within the context of large scale studio production.

7.4.3.1 Content analysis

Oshii located his film within an alternative universe where the equivalents of Europe and the United States are at peace. However, this being Oshii, there is a darker sub-context. Peace has been achieved through the creation of the 'kildren', genetically modified eternal adolescents who fight artificial wars for the endless amusement of the rest of this alternative world. The private Rostock Company contracts with Europe to fight the young cyborgs of the Laurent Company contracted with North America. On one level, the film recycles the dogfights and action scenes typically found in mecha anime. However, Oshii's trademark slow pacing of the story and reflective dialogue takes the focus of the viewer away from the action towards elemental questions of existence and self-determination.

Yuichi Kannami arrives as a pilot replacement at a military airbase. There appears to be a mystery around the fate of the previous pilot and the unstable superior officer, Suito Kusanagi, is unwilling to talk about it. (The name Kusanagi, also appearing as another unstable cyborg in 'Kokaku Kidotai'.) Kannami's relationship with Kusanagi and his fellow pilots is played out against the violent dog fights and hours of inaction as they wait for the next sortie. The mystery of the fate of Kannami's predecessor, Jinron Kuita, Kusanagi's former lover, becomes linked to Kannami's journey of discovery that he has no recollection of his life before arriving on the base. Kusanagi and Kannami develop a friendship sparked by Kusanagi recognising Kannami's quote from Albert Camus' novel, *L'Etranger*, 'the glare

of the sun was unbearable'.

Kusanagi reveals to Kannami that she shot his predecessor, Jinron Kuita, at his request to end his existence. The tragedy of the pilots is that, similarly to the adolescent cyborgs in 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba', they have no control over their lives or death. This existentialist perspective is revealed slowly through the plot which initially appears to be a murder mystery regarding the missing pilot, Kuita. At the end of the film, Kannami is shot down by the Lantern pilot, the Teacher, rumoured to be human. As his replacement arrives at the base, Kusanagi is waiting. The film ends with her warmly welcoming him. His new incarnation has begun.

These cultural references to Japanese Buddhist traditions of reincarnation are re-engineered by Oshii to represent a denial of opportunity rather than a re-birth. The pilots exist but cannot develop beyond adolescence. When they physically die they are 'reborn' with no memories of their previous 'lives'. Oshii depicts one of the pilots, Yudagawa folding his newspaper after sitting with his fellow pilots. Yudagawa dies in battle but later Kannami notices that a new pilot, Aihara, not only looks like Yudagawa but also folds his newspaper the same way. Violence for the children demonstrates that they are alive, as their death demonstrates their immortality. Once again, the duality which characterises Oshii's world view is woven into the plot and characterisation. Oshii has revealed that he attempted to link the three ages of man from Kannami's youth to the adult Teacher and the silent old man who sits on the steps of the drive-in. The inability of the three characters to communicate reflects the disfunctionality of the world where peace apparently has been achieved, but only through the perpetual continuation of stylised war.

The individualism of the self has been replaced by the connected nature of the

network (Horbinski, 2011). Again there is the related theme developed in 'Kokaku Kidotai' of the submersion of the self within the 'network'. Oshii develops a discourse which has particular resonance to Japanese society of the responsibility of the self to contribute to the wellbeing of the whole. In this film, it generates a sense of hopelessness that the self can only emerge as a brief presence before the needs of the many lead to death. Unlike the Buddhist fate of re-incarnation leading to enlightenment, the children are stuck in an endless cycle of perpetual adolescent violence.

Yet Oshii has commented that he perceived 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers* as an optimistic film – he provided Kannami with a positive thought, 'even along the same old road, one can find new ground'. Kannami tries to persuade Kusanagi not to kill herself but to await a better future (the eventual achievement of karma). In doing so, he embodies Buddhist teaching. When Kannami is killed and his replacement arrives at the camp, striking his match in a familiar way, Kusanagi now looks him straight in the eye rather than avoiding his gaze as before. Perhaps the children can be reconciled to their fate.

The theme of violence being resolved by alternates may also be viewed as a criticism by Oshii of contemporary Japan's inability to face Japan's imperialistic past where war was the answer. Here is another facet of Oshii's criticism of contemporary politics found earlier in 'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba'.

7.4.3.2 Cultural factors

It is possible to critique the film as a statement of otaku culture and the aimlessness of Japanese youth. As the children endlessly spend their eternal lives eating, talking, fighting and having sex, so Japanese contemporary youth prefers to live in an alternative

anime universe. As I have outlined, the story extended the classic mecha anime boundaries of young heroes bound to their machines. The action in Oshii's films acts more as a counter balance to the slow panning landscape shots and dramatic pauses which punctuates the depiction of the character's relationship with their existence – never-ending even when they appear to die.

However I suggest that Oshii clearly delineated between the artificially generated pilots and humans. The children pilots continually recycle their memories as they are reborn following death. Oshii is not generally self-reflexive in his approach, however the inclusion of basset hounds are in their own way, a signature of himself (see Figure 68). He added a personal sense of visualisation where the pilots walk past and ignore the mechanic's basset hound (beloved of Oshii in real life).



Figure 68: Oshii's reflexive inclusion of his basset hound

His style also provided clues to his broader approach. The initial fast-paced action scene is followed by a reflective dialogue, accompanied by panning shots of landscape to the background of Kenji Kawai's score. The disruption of the usual linear animation sequence demonstrates the influence of earlier cinematic directors such as Godard and reflects the divergence from orthodox animation which I propose anime represents. In 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers*, Oshii further reinforced his reputation as an innovator in

developing the mecha anime sub-genre beyond anime conventions of fast-paced action.

7.4.3.3 Animation techniques

Oshii demonstrated a technical competence in the animation of 'Sukai Kurora' *Sky Crawlers* for the integration of conventional 'flat' limited 2-D anime with the use of three dimensional CGI. The design of the airplanes, loosely based on WWII twin prop planes, were deliberately old fashioned to enable the fights to be seen on screen. Jet planes would have moved too quickly and Oshii envisaged the aerial combat as visual entertainment for the watching television audiences. This was war by proxy and therefore to be executed to suit the viewers.



Figure 69: Oshii's use of photo-realism in the drawing of the planes

Both Oshii and Hayao Miyazaki make extensive use of anime techniques to represent flight and to use animation as a means of providing point of view perspectives for the audience of the pilot's eye-view in fight sequences. Oshii aimed for a sense of isolation, reinforced by the framing of shots where characters appear to interact out of shot. In the air, his Japanese-speaking pilots communicate in almost unintelligible fractured English, adding to the image of fractured 'self'. Their skills are not 'personal' but instead represent the cumulative reincarnations of their former selves. This contrasts with

Miyazaki's almost joyous use of flight as a motif for freedom and togetherness, in for example 'Kurenai no Buta' *Porco Rosso* where the former pilot Marco is nostalgic for his lost comrades.

Oshii resisted the appeal of making the film completely with CGI animation, even though its ability to provide photo-realism had advanced considerably since 1995. His retention of traditional 2-D limited animation is linked to his confidence in its ability to express emotion through its characterisation and use of layered backgrounds. The 'uncanny valley' perception by viewers is for Oshii a practical barrier to a reliance on photo-realistic CGI techniques (see Figure 69). In addition, the amount of effort required by the animation team to construct an effective CGI animation will always restrict its widespread use.

7.5 Summary

'Kido Keisatsu Patoreiba' *Patlabor 2* was an important film for Mamoru Oshii in experimenting with the complex production processes and mixture of conventional limited animation techniques and cinematic mise-en-scène which produced the completed work. Already his individualistic approach was apparent in this film, using the conventions of anime, yet extending its ability to convey complex realities.

The majority of the films associated with Mamoru Oshii are concerned with the role of social authority in the form of the police or military. The police forces of the 'Patlabor / Kido Keisatsu Panorama' (1988-1993) and 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (1995-2008) films and television series are confronted with the rising militarisation of their organisations, and are concerned with the interaction and fluid boundaries between man

and machine. All of these works were influenced by Oshii's experiences as a young man growing up in Japan. His frustration at what he considers to be Japanese society's refusal to confront issues of violence and armed conflict are reflected in his creative output. Sukai Kurora *Sky Crawlers* (2008) developed the duality of Oshii's relationship with violence and peace, human and cyborg to a new allegory of existence and death.

Oshii represents a distinctive voice in Japanese film making which argues for the inclusion of animation within the central canon of film tradition to a far greater extent than exists for orthodox animation.

Chapter 8: Summary of the Study's Conclusions

'Confidence is a temporary condition, it lasts until you actually understand the situation'.
(Larry Bison, 'Uchuu Kyouda', Watanabe, 2012)

The study aimed to test the hypothesis that anime represents a significantly different filmic form to that of orthodox Hollywood animation as defined by Wells (1998). As such, it deserves its own distinct place within film tradition as an inherently Japanese cultural product with global impact in its trans-medial digital forms. Anime represents a novel form of animation in its ability to be disseminated in different guises yet to still retain a distinct creative integrity which is characterised by complex narratives, physical distinctiveness in terms of animation techniques, reflective characterisation, sophisticated themes and signature texts associated with individual directors. Although anime varies in production quality across the entire output of the industry, nevertheless, as an animation form, it represents a distinct entity. Its 'significance' represented through common meaning and values across diverse texts.

8.1 The significance of anime in the global film tradition

In framing the conclusions of this study, I acknowledge that there is a body of opinion which places anime more directly as part of a global film tradition where its Japanese origin defines anime as a sub-genre of the animation canon. From this perspective, anime's significance is more that it influenced the dominant animation of Hollywood into producing works aimed at diverse audiences (Daliot-Bul, 2013). Even anime's reception in the United States of America in the 1990s may be viewed as a continuation of the nineteenth century fascination with all things Japanese (Napier, 2007).

The evidence for anime being a sub-genre of a generic animation form has already

been reviewed in Chapter 4. It includes the use in many sub-genres of anime of 'mukokuseki' or non-Japanese features for characterisation. Osamu Tezuka acknowledged the influence of Hollywood on his classic anime styles which have formed the basis for representation since the 1950s. Orthodox Hollywood animation texts, represented by Walt Disney, also provided inspiration for Tezuka's work.

Similarly, as has been demonstrated in Chapter 5, Hayao Miyazaki is clearly influenced by Western literary genres in many of his creative narratives. It is also possible to identify an alignment of anime and Hollywood's joint interest in dystopic and psychological thriller genres, exemplified by the similarity in the themes of films such as 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* (Oshii, 1995) / *The Matrix* (Wachowski, 1999), *Paprika* (Kon, 2006) / *Inception* (Nolan, 2010) and 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue* (Kon, 1997) / *Black Swan* (Aronofsky, 2010). There are therefore areas of anime which blend well into a discourse on global film culture, interpreting anime as an interesting variant on a common film tradition driven by the influence of Hollywood.

The production processes for anime also reflect the broader global industrial norms for animation. Japanese anime studios use Hollywood-inspired methods to develop and produce the cel-drawings, and digital CGI forms a significant element of anime feature films in the twenty first century. The distribution and marketing of anime films reflect the emphasis on multi-modal delivery common to both anime and Hollywood animation. In purchasing the transnational rights to Studio Ghibli's output in the 1990s, the Walt Disney Company acknowledged the commercial value of anime films outside Japan. This attention was amplified by the rapid growth of Internet fandoms in the same period where anime fans co-created, discussed and shared anime series in a medium dis-associated from its

original context in Japan. In reviewing this view of anime as part of a wider transnational film tradition, what is the counter evidence which demonstrates that anime is a novel animation form?

8.2 Anime as a novel form of animation

The hypothesis for the study proposes that anime represents a novel form of animation framed by Japanese aesthetics, iconography, social norms and a well-developed role for individual anime directors. The challenge set by this hypothesis is to be able to demonstrate that it is possible to map common characteristics related to Japanese culture and tradition across diverse anime texts, as evidence of the underlying integrity of the proposal.

In Chapter 2, I examined the differing views of anime which have emerged which demonstrate the complexity of the task. Thomas Lamarre's (2009) work to interpret the physical presentation of anime as an example of 'radical perspectivalism' was a particular influence on the study. From this viewpoint, it is possible to argue that anime represents a break from the Cartesian duality of Hollywood animation, and well as deviating more generally from the orthodox Hollywood animation tradition as defined by Wells (2002).

Interpreting anime from a Western perspective reflects the innate risk identified by Heidegger (May, 1996) of framing Japanese cultural outputs in terms of Western cinematic conventions. According to Wells (2002), orthodox or Hollywood animation is characterised by its specific continuity, narrative form and recognisable characters. This reliance on a unity of style leads to a cinema of 'assurance' (Napier, 2005). In this study, I argue that anime is a novel form of animation in the context of Wells' paradigm for animation in that

its unity is based on Japanese cultural tradition not an adherence to external conventions.

In Chapter 3, I critiqued the usefulness of content analysis, genre theory and semiotic theory in the context of the impact of trans-medial digital developments, glocalisation and the importance of auteur theories. The evidence provided by close readings of the selected texts of three influential anime directors was analysed using the chosen methodology and a consistency of approach was found across the work of all three, despite differing attitudes towards themes and subjects. Distinct visual conventions and a strong belief in the ability of storytelling to convey elemental representations of realities and meaning underpin the creative texts. The distinctiveness of the individual interpretation varies from Miyazaki's visual modalities on environmental relationships to Kon's subversive use of reality and illusion and Oshii's reflective dialogues on what constitutes 'life' in a digital age. The consistent complexity of anime is not replicated in the output of orthodox animation as a popular mass cinematic form.

8.3 The animation paradigm for anime

The study adopted Wells' (2002) definition of animation which identified criteria by which the genre could be divided into orthodox, developmental and experimental. As a popular mass cultural form, anime would fall into Wells' orthodox category. However my hypothesis proposed that anime is framed in a significantly different way from orthodox cel animation, influenced by Japanese aesthetical factors, iconography, social norms and a well-developed role for individual anime directors. Anime takes animation as a creative cultural form into new territory.

In Chapter 2, I used Thomas Lamarre's groundbreaking deconstruction of anime as an animation form as the basis for my argument that anime is framed in a different way to

Hollywood animation. His non-determinist stance proposes that anime is composed of movement and perspective which results in a unique combination best described as the 'animetic' process where the space between frames represents an integral part of the composition of the images. Yet Lamarre generally rejects the social influences which Hiroki Azuma (2009) perceives as being central to anime's position within Japanese film tradition. For Lamarre, it is possible to view the 'animetic' process as being a mainly technical mechanism. Socio-economic factors are present for Lamarre in the expression of capitalist desire to extend the distribution of the anime film into merchandise and digital forms. Iwabuchi (2002) extended this argument to illustrate that anime is an example of a culturally 'odourless' product. That is, there is a deliberate intention on the part of the anime studios to make the product as attractive to the non-Japanese consumerist audience as possible for commercial purposes.

Here I differ from Lamarre, and I propose that anime is best deconstructed via an approach which acknowledges that the technical basis for anime as an animated form and industrial process is best viewed within a social context. In summary, the significance of anime as a novel form of animation is specifically linked to a broader alignment within Japanese cultural identity. Azuma's post-modernist approach underpins this reading of anime where otaku both influence and are influenced by anime texts. In terms of evolution, anime therefore represents a continuation of Japanese film tradition which has frequently borrowed from other film cultures, notably Hollywood, but then subverted this influence through a specifically Japanese gaze. Here the significance of 'Japanese-ness' or 'nihonjinron' forms an important counterpoint to Iwabuchi's emphasis on the interpretation of anime as culturally 'odourless'.

In its broader influence, I propose that the evidence for anime being regarded as a significant novel form is centred around its adoption of digital trans-modality and interactivity to become a mediated cinematic form which breaks new ground. The dialogue between the anime director as the creative force and the viewer as the active consumer is well developed trans-modally in anime, from the otaku fan in Japan to the American fan sub creator.

The wider implications for this hypothesis are that modern anime represents a significant development as animation emerges as a trans-medial form in digital environments. Grounded in traditional drawing rather than relying on extensive CGI, anime has embraced digital intermediality whilst maintaining its connections with traditional Japanese aesthetics and social behaviours. Limiting the degree of movement and introducing stillness into an essentially moving image, anime challenges the predictability of orthodox Hollywood animation. Its agility as a cinematic form, provides the best chance for anime to develop as a radical global phenomenon yet its reflection of specific Japanese cultural traits may be a limiting factor for external audiences. Anime remains a phenomenon which rightly continues to attract attention from researchers.

8.4 Evidence from the selected texts

The research sought to identify evidence from close readings of selected works by three distinctive anime directors. These directors have produced successful feature films in very different genres and styles. The evidence from the five films selected from Miyazaki's canon was consistent with regard to his use of specifically Japanese iconography and aesthetics, taking familiar themes from Japanese folklore and including intertextual

references where they support the underlying message aimed at his Japanese audience. Using Wells' (1998) criteria for measuring orthodoxy, Miyazaki's creative output demonstrates that anime deviates significantly from the norm. Specific continuity and narrative form are complicated through a deliberate mixing of genres where characters await developments alongside the viewer. Unlike Hollywood animation where specific continuity is represented by an assurance that an individual action by the character will have predictable consequences, anime represents 'de-assurance' where characters move between differing realities. Content similarly deviates from the orthodox approach with a richness of visual style and a sophistication of theme and characterisation. Miyazaki's use of reflective scenes which include stillness and no dialogue also provide evidence of a specifically Japanese aesthetical approach rarely found in orthodox cel animation.

With regard to his drawing style, the combination of full and limited animation provides a contrast to the movement-driven approach of orthodox animation. The relational framework between anime, animation and the live action cinematic tradition emphasises the construction of anime as a multi-layered visual construction where all the possible layers (background, foreground, characters, colouring) are drawn to provide spacing within the image and therefore provide movement. The aerial sequences in 'Kurenai no Buta' *Porco Rosso* between Marco and the Pirates, O-Totoro's magical flight with the children in 'Tonari no Totoro' *My Neighbor Totoro* and Sheeta and Pazu's flying sequences in 'Tenkuu no Shiro Rapyuta' *Laputa Castle in the Sky*, are examples of the use of a particularly Japanese drawing perspective in depicting visual depth. The emphasis on close observation and attention to detail echo Japanese cinematic convention found, for example, in the films of Yasujiro Ozu (1903-1963).

Similarly, Satoshi Kon's anime films demonstrate a break with Wells' definition of orthodox animation. 'Pafekuto Buru' *Perfect Blue* is a shocking film in terms of its fast and violent story and clever blending of reality and fantasy. Its production as an animated film rather than a live action work extended the boundaries of animation as a medium suitable for portraying 'real' world situations. Kon demonstrated how an 'animetic' approach was as capable as live action cinema of exploring serious contemporary issues. In his management of reality and fantasy, Kon exploited the medium to create a more convincing visual spectacle, literally drawing on the traditions of Japanese visual art rather than orthodox Western animation, as evidenced by 'Sennen Joyu' *Millennium Actress*. In the case of 'Sennen Joyu', the multiple layering of themes, time periods and characterisation demonstrates Lamarre's 'radical perspectivalism' approach. The layers both confirm and undermine the narrative. Viewers can use the visualisation to draw themselves into the story and to acknowledge the distortion of reality as the narrative turns from fact to fiction. 'Tokyo Goddofazazu' *Tokyo Godfathers* similarly demonstrates a complexity of plot and characterisation which is presented using a multi layered approach.

Oshii represents a distinctive voice in Japanese film making which argues for the inclusion of animation within the central canon of film tradition to a far greater extent than exists for orthodox animation. His blending of traditional hand-drawn cel drawings with CGI displays the dynamic not static background which Lamarre (2009) highlighted as one of definitive characteristics of anime. The reflective dialogues with which Oshii developed his discourse in 'Kokaku Kidotai' *Ghost in the Shell* became part of his signature style. As anime develops across digital trans-medial forms, Oshii adopted a self-reflexive debate on what it means to be human in a digital world. In his film 'Sukai Kurora' *The Sky Crawlers*,

the linear narrative expected from orthodox animation is subverted. Oshii's approach to animation challenges the genre boundaries between live action cinema and the animated image.

Thus the evidence from a close analysis of the selected work of all three directors demonstrated characteristics which are significantly different from Wells' description of orthodox Hollywood animation, where significance is defined as demonstrating common meaning and values across texts. However, empirically, these characteristics can be interpreted as being part of a long tradition of Japanese aesthetics and social norms, I conclude therefore, that these indigenous cultural influences rather than those of orthodox Hollywood animation define modern anime.

8.5 The identification of further research

Anime's divergent forms provide a complex environment for researchers. This study primarily examined texts which were intended to be shown initially in cinemas and then distributed in multi-modal forms. Such texts equate to films which demand a high level of investment and effort to produce and therefore, as a result, include a richness of content, narrative and animation. The majority of anime is produced as series for television or as OVA with the creative energy spread over a longer period of time. Further research could examine anime television series using a similar methodology and approach.

The inclusion of elements of digital multi-modal forms is very relevant in terms of discourses on the future of film as a creative form. The association of anime with user-generated content, particularly beyond Japan, raises interesting issues around the influences of glocalisation and the differing perceptions of the original as a 'Japanese'

cultural product. An extension of the study hypothesis to determine how the novel aspects of animation as a film form shown by anime specifically influence emerging global digital transmodality would assist an understanding of the future place of film as a mass cultural form.

Finally, the study hypothesis, as a comparative study, could be used to investigate the significance of other non-Hollywood animation industries using the same benchmarks to develop a more holistic view of how animation is developing as a global form in digital environments.

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