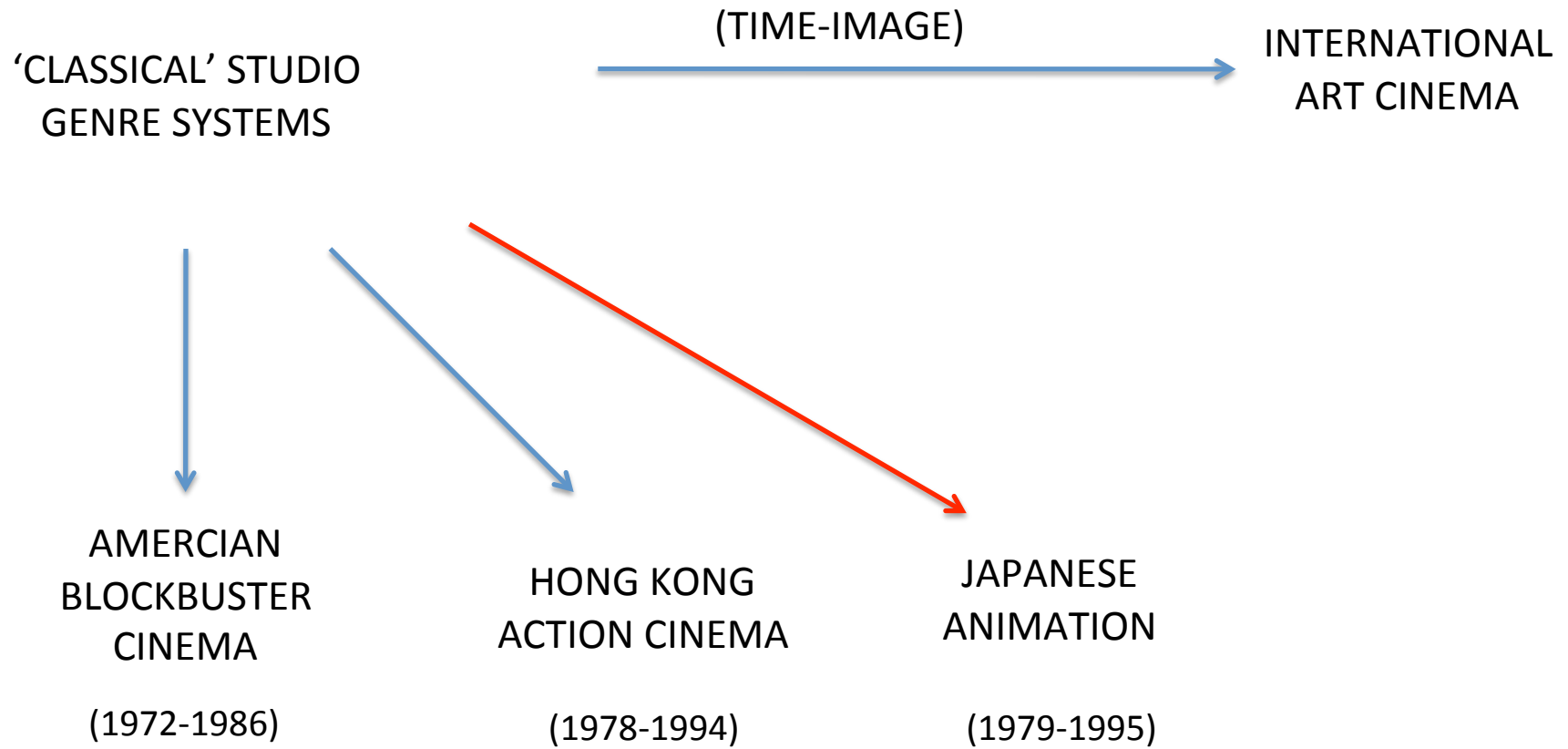


cyborg times

JAPANESE ANIMATION AND THE
MULTIPLANAR IMAGE, 1978-1995

				1895	Birth of Cinema
1900s	Attractions				
				1902	<i>A Trip to the Moon</i>
1910s	Narrative 1: Continuity Editing				
1920s	Narrative 2: Classical Film Forms / Montage Theories				
				1917	Tanizaki 'Pure Film'
				1924	<i>Aelita</i>
				1924	Epstein 'Photogénie'
1930s	Sound	↔	Radio & Telecommunications		
				1932	<i>FP1 Doesn't Answer</i>
1940s	Color & Plasticity				
				1938	Imamura, 'Cartoon Film Theory'
				1940	Eisenstein, 'Notes on Disney'
				1941	<i>Princess Iron Fan</i>
1955-65	Expanded Film Form & Genre	↔	Television		
				1958	<i>Invention for Destruction</i>
				1960	<i>Silent Star</i>
				1965	Sontag 'Imagination of Disaster'
1965-1975	New Waves				
				1972	<i>Solaris</i>
1980s	Global Waves 1				
				1986	<i>Peking Opera Blues</i>
1990s	Global Waves 2				
				1995	<i>The Ghost in the Shell</i>

GLOBAL WAVES



TOPICS:

Media

Genre

Cities

Animation

Hybrid Bodies

media

WHY 1979-1995?



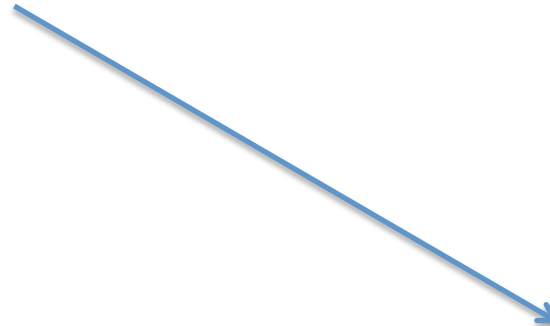
Galaxy Express 999 (dir. Rintarō, 1979)



OSHII Mamoru, 1995

GLOBAL WAVES

CLASSICAL
ANIMATION
FORM



JAPANESE
ANIMATION

(1979-1995)



video,
cinema, and
'expanded television media'

GLOBAL WAVES

HONG KONG
ACTION CINEMA

(1978-1994)



JAPANESE
ANIMATION

(1979-1995)



video,
cinema, and
'expanded television media'

GLOBAL WAVES

AMERICAN
BLOCKBUSTER
CINEMA

(1972-1986)



HONG KONG
ACTION CINEMA

(1978-1994)



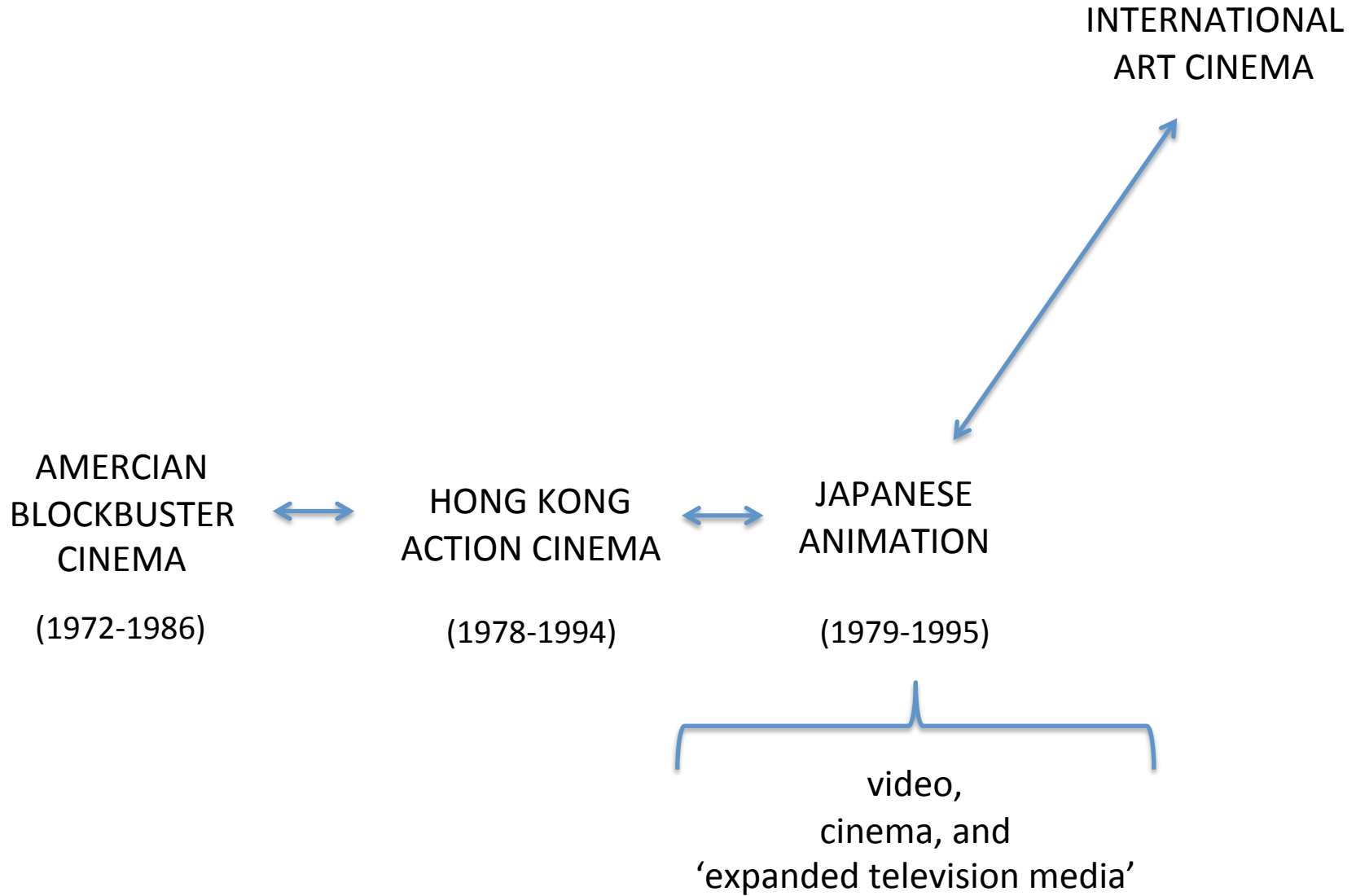
JAPANESE
ANIMATION

(1979-1995)



video,
cinema, and
'expanded television media'

GLOBAL WAVES



TELEVISION

Television animation is moving onto the big screen, bringing with it a different techno-aesthetics.

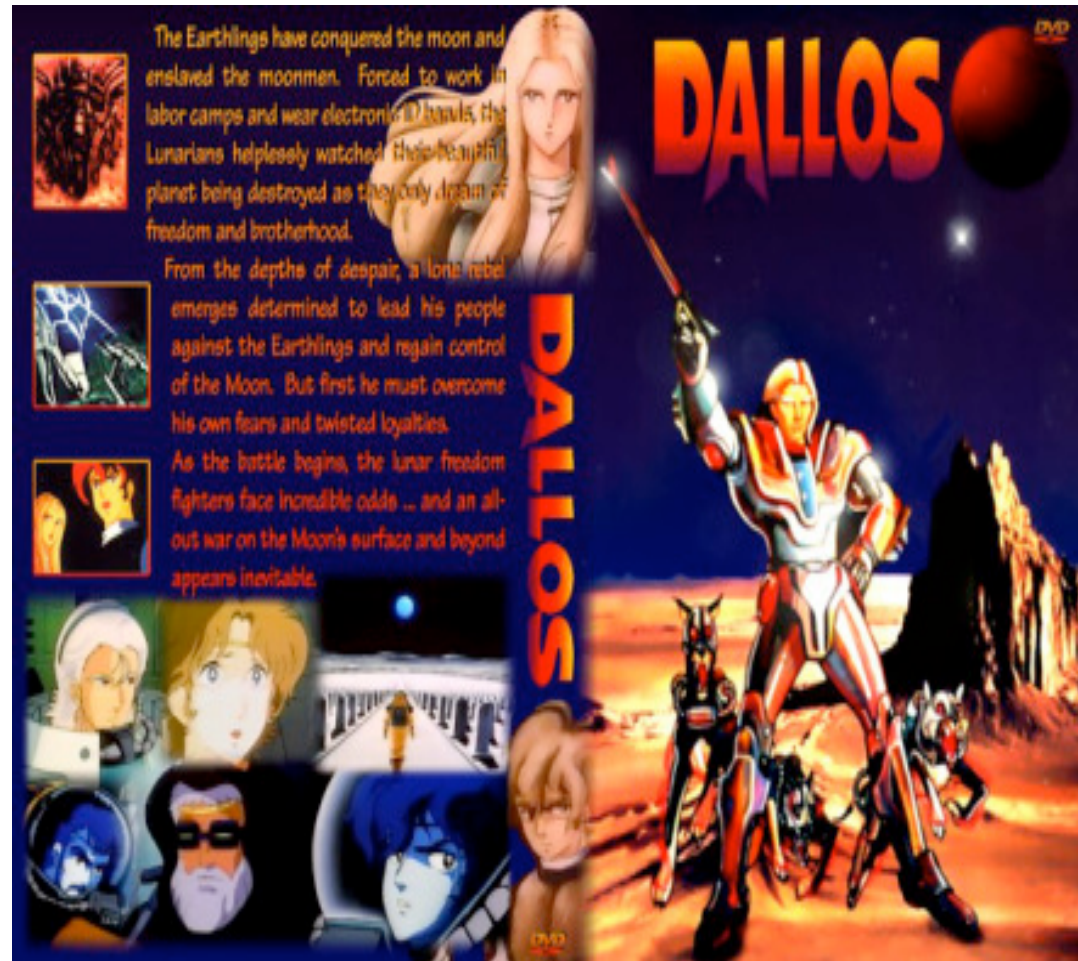
CINEMA

Movies began moving onto the small screen in the 1960s when broadcasters bought libraries of old films. But now current and recent films are moving onto the TV screen either through video rental or through cable services.

VIDEO

Video is transforming the relation between cinema and television. But is video a medium in itself?

Two important video forms emerge: the music video and the OVA (Original Video Animation).



Oshii Mamoru made the first OVA, or direct-to-video animation in 1983.

NETWORKS

In Japan, this was called the era of 'new media,' to refer to the explosion of what might be called 'analog networks.'

PLATFORMS

Platforms were plugged into other platforms (TV + VCR + Game Console).

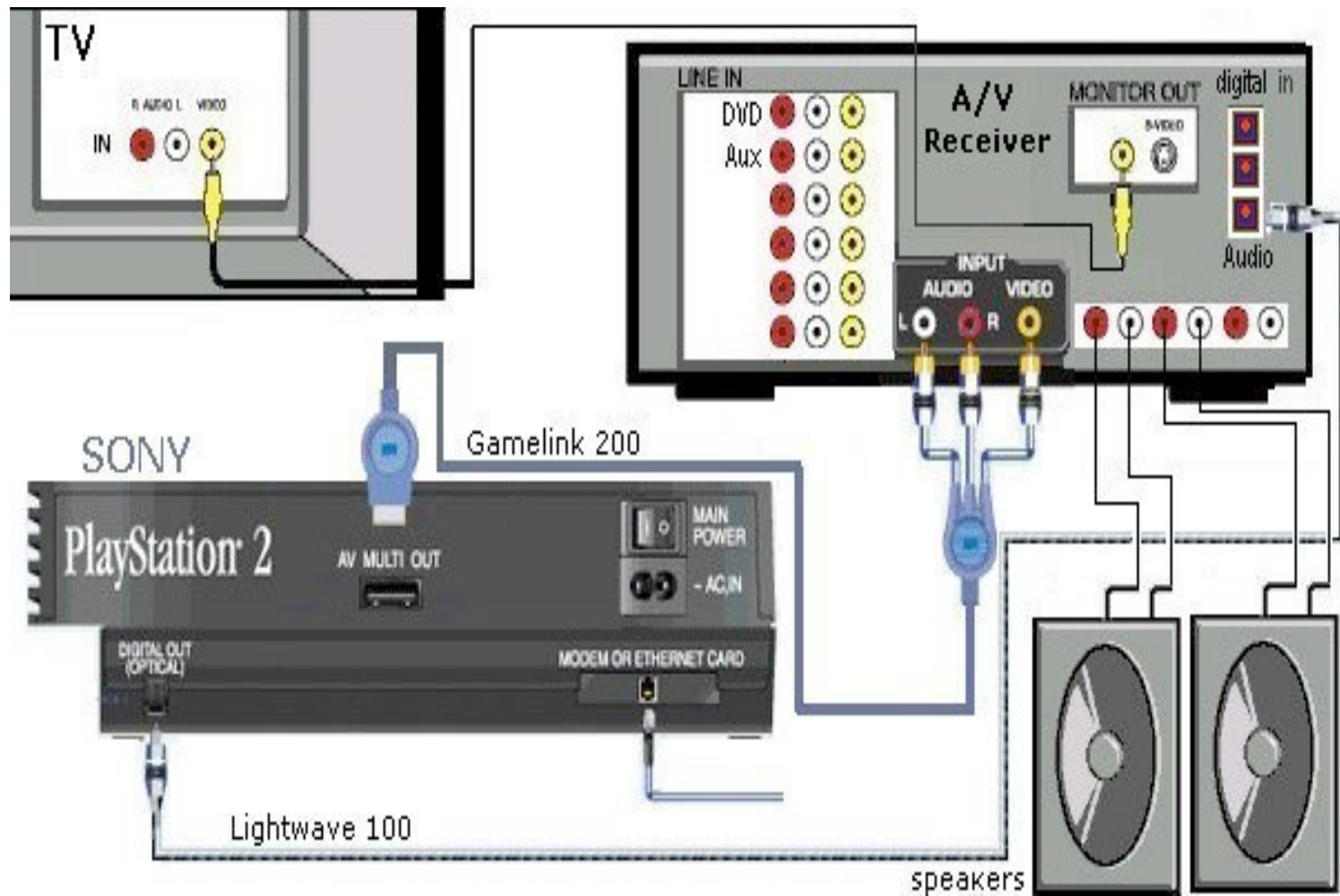
INFRASTRUCTURES

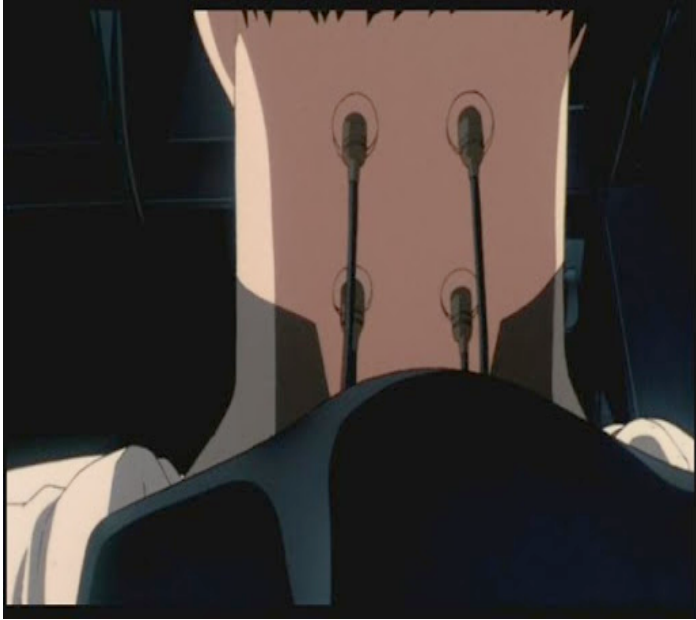
Platforms were connected to new delivery systems such as cable and satellite in addition to broadcast networks.

WIRED WORLD

The cyborg emerges in this era of analog networks.

The cyborg is like a media platform, like a VCR, plugged into other platforms with cables.









genre



Blade Runner, 1982; dir. Ridley Scott



Terminator, 1984; dir. James Cameron

THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT.



ROBOCOP

A Jon Davison PRODUCTION • A Paul Verhoeven FILM • Peter Weller • Nancy Allen • RoboCop • Daniel O'Hertyly • Ronny Cox
Kurtwood Smith • Miguel Ferrer • MUSIC BY Basil Poledouris • DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Jost Vacano • FILM EDITOR Frank J. Urioste
ROBOCOP DESIGNED BY Rob Bottin • EXECUTIVE PRODUCER Jon Davison • WRITTEN BY Edward Neumeier & Michael Miner • PRODUCED BY Arne Schmidt
An ORION PICTURES Release
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RoboCop, 1987; dir. Paul Verhoeven



Akira, 1988; dir. Otomo Katsuhiro



OSHII Mamoru, 1995



The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

“Steven Spielberg’s *A.I.* Is Extraordinary.”

— Lisa Schwarzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly*

HALEY JOEL OSMENT

JUDE LAW



A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM
A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



DREAMWORKS PICTURES AND WARNER BROS. PICTURES PRESENT
AN AMBLIN/STANLEY KUBRICK PRODUCTION A STEVEN SPIELBERG FILM "A.I. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE" HALEY JOEL OSMENT JUDE LAW FRANCES O'CONNOR
BRENDAN GLEESON AND WILLIAM HURT COSTUME DESIGNER STAN WINSTON STUDIO PRODUCTION DESIGNER INDUSTRIAL LIGHT & MAGIC EDITOR BOB RINGWOOD EXECUTIVE PRODUCER JOHN WILLIAMS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER MICHAEL KAHN ACE PRODUCED BY ROCK CARTER DIRECTED BY JANIUSZ KAMINSKI ASC EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JAN HARLAN WALTER E. PARKES PRODUCED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG
SCREENPLAY BY IAN WATSON BASED UPON THE STORY BY BRIAN ALDBY DIRECTED BY KATHLEEN KENNEDY STEVEN SPIELBERG BONNIE CURTIS PRODUCED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG



NOW AVAILABLE ON VIDEO & DVD

DREAMWORKS
HOME ENTERTAINMENT

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A.I. 2001; dir. Steven Spielberg



Blade Runner, 1982; dir. Ridley Scott



Blade Runner 2049, 2017; dir Denis Villeneuve



RoboCop, 1987; dir. Paul Verhoeven



RoboCop, 2014; dir. José Padhila

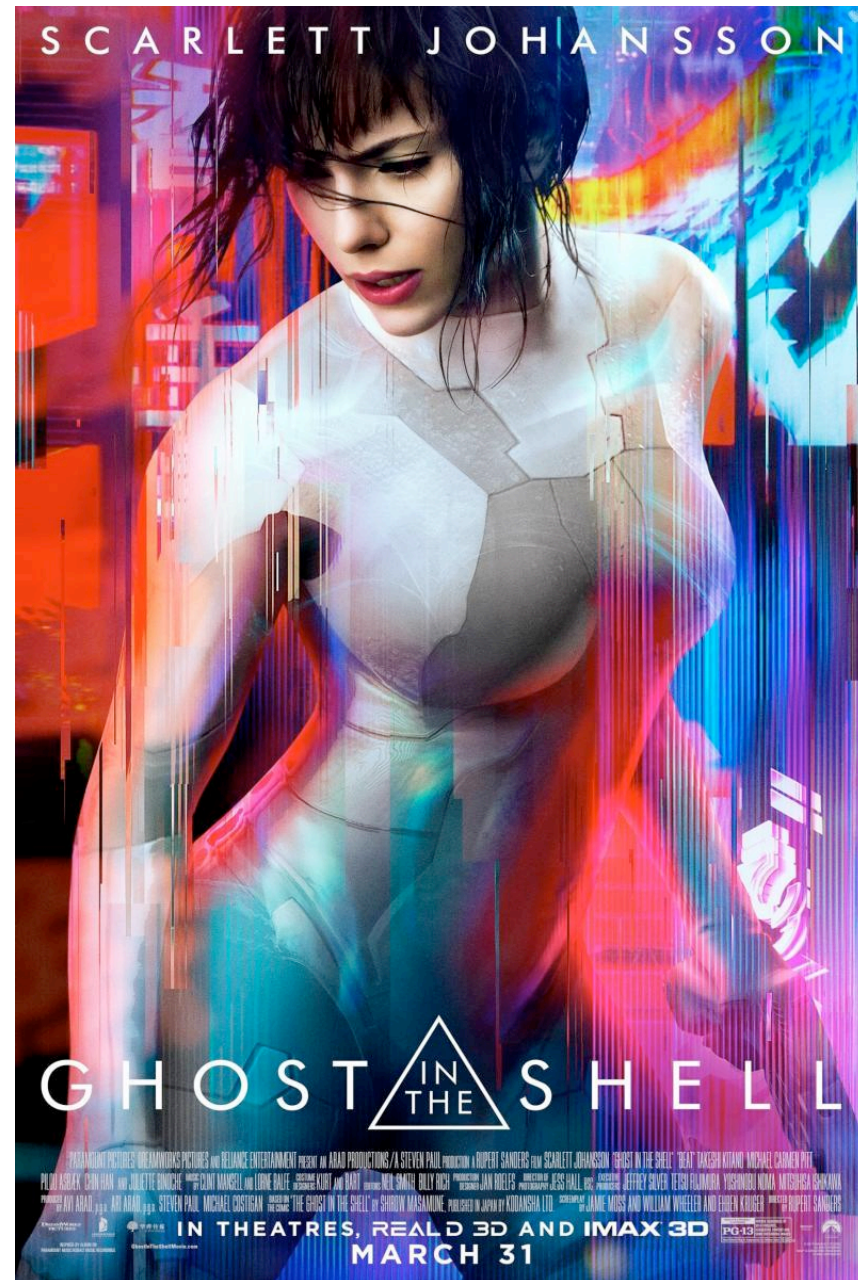


Terminator Genisys, 2015; dir. Alan Taylor

Terminator, 1984; dir. James Cameron



OSHII Mamoru, 1995



2017; dir. Rupert Sanders

Does a consistent genre emerge across these films in the 1980s and 1990s?

After all, we see replicants, robots, cyborgs, AI...



There is a tentative lineage especially across these three films, but is this a genre?

Recall, from Moine's account of genre, that classificatory schema not only fail empirically. They also fail conceptually to grasp the function of genre.

Of course, we should consider some elements and organizing principles of cyberpunk or cyborg films...

Nonetheless, even if we begin to think about the 'syntax' and 'semantic elements' of the cyberpunk genre, we should remember that the function of genre is productive and, above all, communicative.



Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)

Cyborgs have continued to thrive in Japanese animation, comics, and video games in a way they have not in Hollywood cinema.

But, following Moine, we need to consider the conditions for this success, which is related to the *communicative function* of genre — a genre that is centred on questions about communications!

For instance...



“Plug-In Girl”

If cyborgs continue to thrive in Japanese animation, comics, and video games, it is because cyborgs need a decentralized mode of production.

Cyborgs don't seem thrive under highly centralized and hierarchized big-budget high-tech conditions of production.

In other words, the prevalence of cyborgs is not a reflection of Japanese cultural values. It is a matter of a different "production culture" that is smaller scale, lower budget, more flexible and less centralized, with high turn-over.

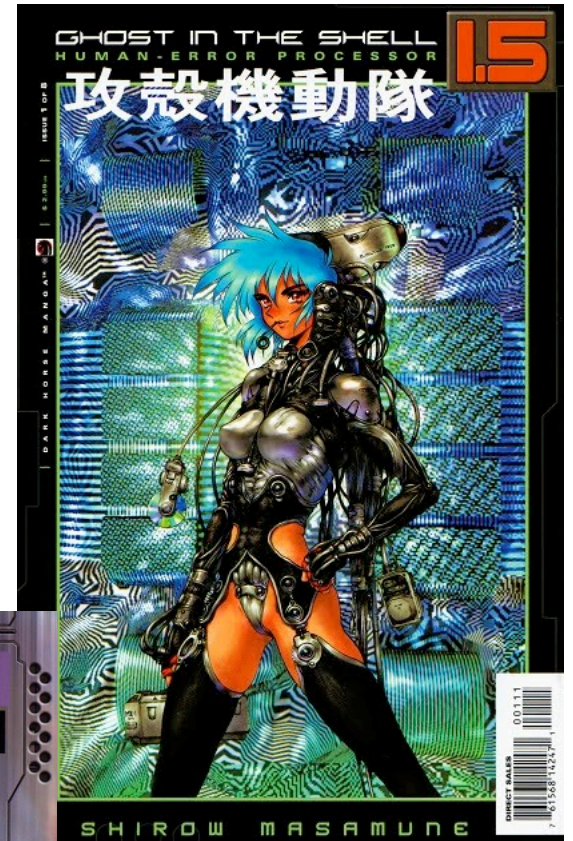
It is a production culture that took shape in the 1980s through the 'new media' environment that arose where video technologies allowed television to become cinema, cinema to become television, comics to become television and/or cinema, etc.



1989-1990

SHIROW MASAMUNE
MANGA

1990-1997



2003



OSHII Mamoru, 1995

FILMS



OSHII Mamoru, 2004



Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex
2002-2003; dir. KAMIYAMA Kenji

ANIMATED
TELEVISION SERIES



Ghost in the Shell: S.A.C. 2nd Gig
2004-2005; dir. KAMIYAMA Kenji



KAMIYAMA Kenji
ANIMATED
TELEVISION FILM

2006



OVA, 2013-2015; TV SERIES, 2015; dir. NOMURA Kazuya



2015

DIVERGENT SERIES



Is the appearance of some kind of 'technologically-made' or 'technologically enhanced' being that take on human form enough to make a communicative genre?

Do we also need cyberspace?

cities

Where is cyberspace?

By the 1980s, the Cold War space race seemed a thing of the past. Outer space voyages felt more like fantasy than science — as clearly announced in space operas like *Star Wars* (1977).

Science fiction began to focus on advances in telecommunications and information technologies, instead of outer space.

Films like *2001* and *Solaris* had imagined how the journey into outer space would ultimately turn into a journey into “inner space.”

The new genre called “cyberpunk” dealt with a space that was neither inner nor outer, and somehow both at once. Cyberspace was in fact real, really out there, and yet its access seemed to be in here, in your head.

How does cyberspace relate to real space?

On the one hand, cyberspace seems capable of encompassing and enclosing real space. Somehow it feels large enough to subsume reality... Examples: *MegaZone 23* and *The Matrix*.

There is a subgenre of cyberpunk in which outer space voyages and battles occur not “out there” in space, but in cyberspace. And the “trapped in cyberspace” genre remains as popular as ever, especially in the “trapped in a video game” form.

On the other hand, cyberspace threatens (or promises) to undermine or destroy all the older boundaries and limits. *The Ghost in the Shell* begins with such a vision.

**IN THE NEAR FUTURE - CORPORATE NETWORKS REACH OUT TO THE
STARS, ELECTRONS AND LIGHT FLOW THROUGHOUT THE UNIVERSE.**

**THE ADVANCE OF COMPUTERISATION, HOWEVER, HAS NOT YET WIPED
OUT NATIONS AND ETHNIC GROUPS.**

In sum, cyberspace oscillates paradoxically between two possibilities:

1. Cyberspace is like a container, and everything is inside cyberspace.
2. Cyberspace permeates everything; cyberspace is inside you.

The Ghost in the Shell imagines cyberspace like an ocean — the sea of information.

At the same time, the imagination of networks oscillates between two possibilities: the network is in the nodes, versus the network is in the links.

Thus we arrive at the 'city-island-node' in the sea of information.



But why Hong Kong?

What does it mean to model the “cybercity” on Hong Kong, as in *The Ghost in the Shell*? Or to make the future Los Angeles look like Hong Kong, as in *Blade Runner*?

There are two ways of interpreting the imagery of “Asian global cities” in the cyberpunk genre.

Recall that the 1980s and 1990s were a time when discourses on globalization were the rage. In such discourses, global cities were imagined to be undermining the authority of nation-states, replacing them in the world economy. At the same time, the rise of cities like Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and then Shanghai, Seoul, and Dubai forced a reconsideration of assumptions about the centrality of cities such as New York, Paris, London.

The “Asian global city” was imagined as a node where flows of information and flows of population were densely interconnected.

The critical interpretation of this imaginary of the futuristic Asian global city in Western cyberpunk sees it as a form of “techno-Orientalism.” Western cyberpunk repeats the old Orientalist prejudices that “Asia” and “Asians” belong to a different timeframe than the modern Western world.

Techno-Orientalism situates the Asian global city as at once archaic and futuristic in order to assure the dominance of Western identity over the present. “Asia” is presented as temporally out of whack.

But the cybercity of *The Ghost in the Shell* is clearly a fusion of Tokyo and Hong Kong with the vision of Los Angeles in *Blade Runner*.

For Wong Kin Yuen (2000), this situation allows a more affirmative account of this futuristic imagining of Hong Kong.

In “On the Edge of Spaces: *Blade Runner*, *Ghost in the Shell*, and Hong Kong's Cityscape,” he writes,

“It is now widely acknowledged that Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* (1982/1992) initiated a whole tradition of cult movies later grouped under the label “cyberpunk.” *Blade Runner's* style draws its images from urban spaces all over the world, including such Asian cities as Tokyo and Hong Kong. Science fiction film critics are less aware, however, that when anime film director Mamoru Oshii was looking for a model of the city of the future in a computerized world, he turned for his primary inspiration to the cityscape of Hong Kong. Through his art designers, actual spots in the city of Hong Kong were transformed into the mise-en-scene of *Ghost in the Shell*, first released in the United States in March 1996.

“Science fiction has not fared well in Hong Kong (either in terms of production or consumption), nor is there a cyberpunk culture among Hong Kong's young computer users. So the question arises: what elements in Hong Kong provided inspiration for this cinematic representation of a near-future city characterized by decadence, anarchy, and fantasy on the one hand, and a mistrusted, high-tech hyper-reality on the other?

“I hope to validate Antony King's argument that colonial cities have the best chance of establishing a cityscape of the future that embraces racial and cultural differences.”

What elements?

Yuen makes a number of points, but here are two that stand out.

First, he draws on Abbas's discussion of the *déjà disparu*. Hong Kong is situated in paradoxical temporality where the present reality feels unreal, caught as it is between two geopolitical temporalities. It is at once in the past and in the future.

Second, he notes the combination of density of population and density of information in Hong Kong's Times Square. It is as if flows of people were turning into flows of information, and conscious of their transformation.

But Yuen does not interpret this situation in terms of misrepresentation or self-alienation, as in the critique of techno-Orientalism. He sees possibilities for new narratives about Hong Kong:

Hong Kong's citizens might create narratives that reflect their "subject's self-positioning and social agency in a cosmopolitan context" (Ong 755); they might make Hong Kong a model for the global megalopolis of the future. I think that it is Hong Kong's urbanity in embracing racial and cultural differences on the edge of empire that has caught the eye of cyberpunk writers and filmmakers.

In this respect, he is in accord with LeiLani Nishime who (as we will discuss later) sees possibilities for imagining multiraciality in the cyborg.

Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)

animation

1930s-1940s

Short Animated Attractions  Feature-Length Animated Films



1937



1941

1930s-1940s

Short Animated Attractions  Feature-Length Animated Films



1942







1945

1930s-1940s

Short Animated Attractions  Feature-Length Animated Films

Ways of understanding this historical transformation into 'classical animation form':

Cinema of Attractions  Narrative Cinema
 Classical Film Form
 Vernacular Modernism
 Movement-Image

1950s-1960s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM



1962

1950s-1960s

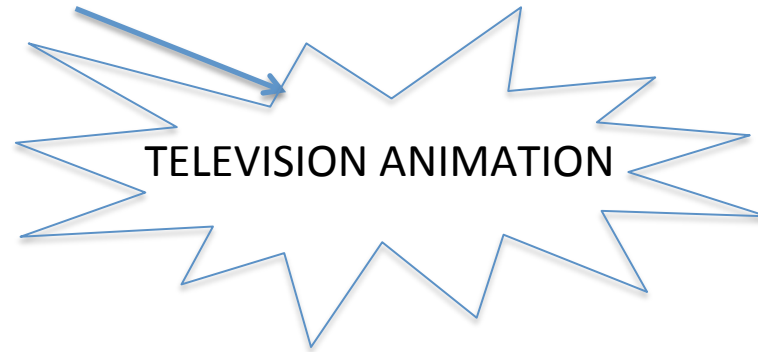
CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



1958

1950s-1960s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



1950s-1960s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



TELEVISION ANIMATION
ASTRO BOY

1950s-1960s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



“Full Animation”



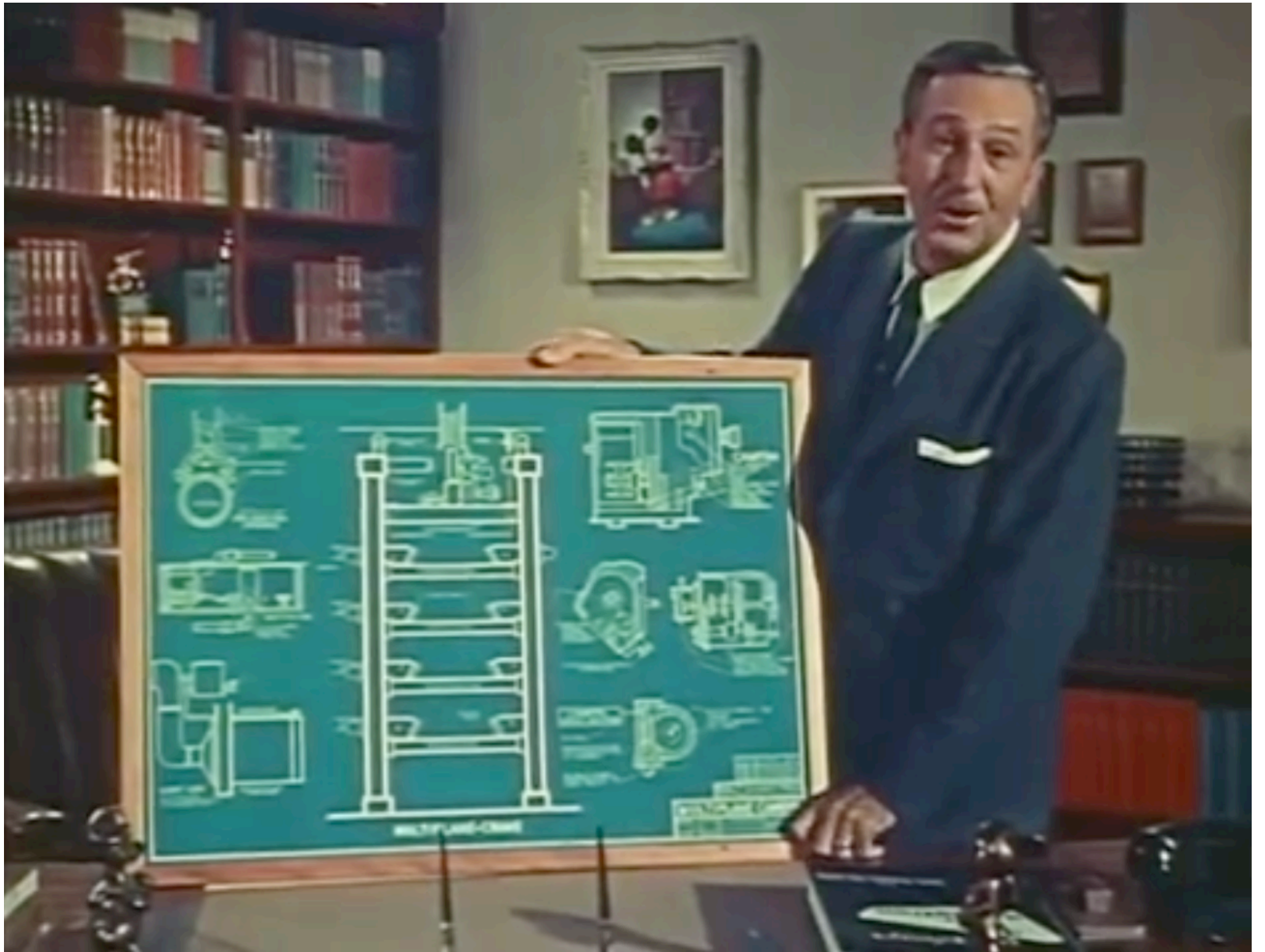
“Limited Animation”

FULL ANIMATION

Fully animated films are animated at 24 frames per second, with a combination of animation on ones and twos, meaning that drawings can be held for one frame out of 24 or two frames out of 24.

character animation: the ideal is smooth, graceful, fluid action

depth: the ideal is cinematic movement into depth in accordance with Cartesian perspective, which is to say “closed compositing” or “cinematism”

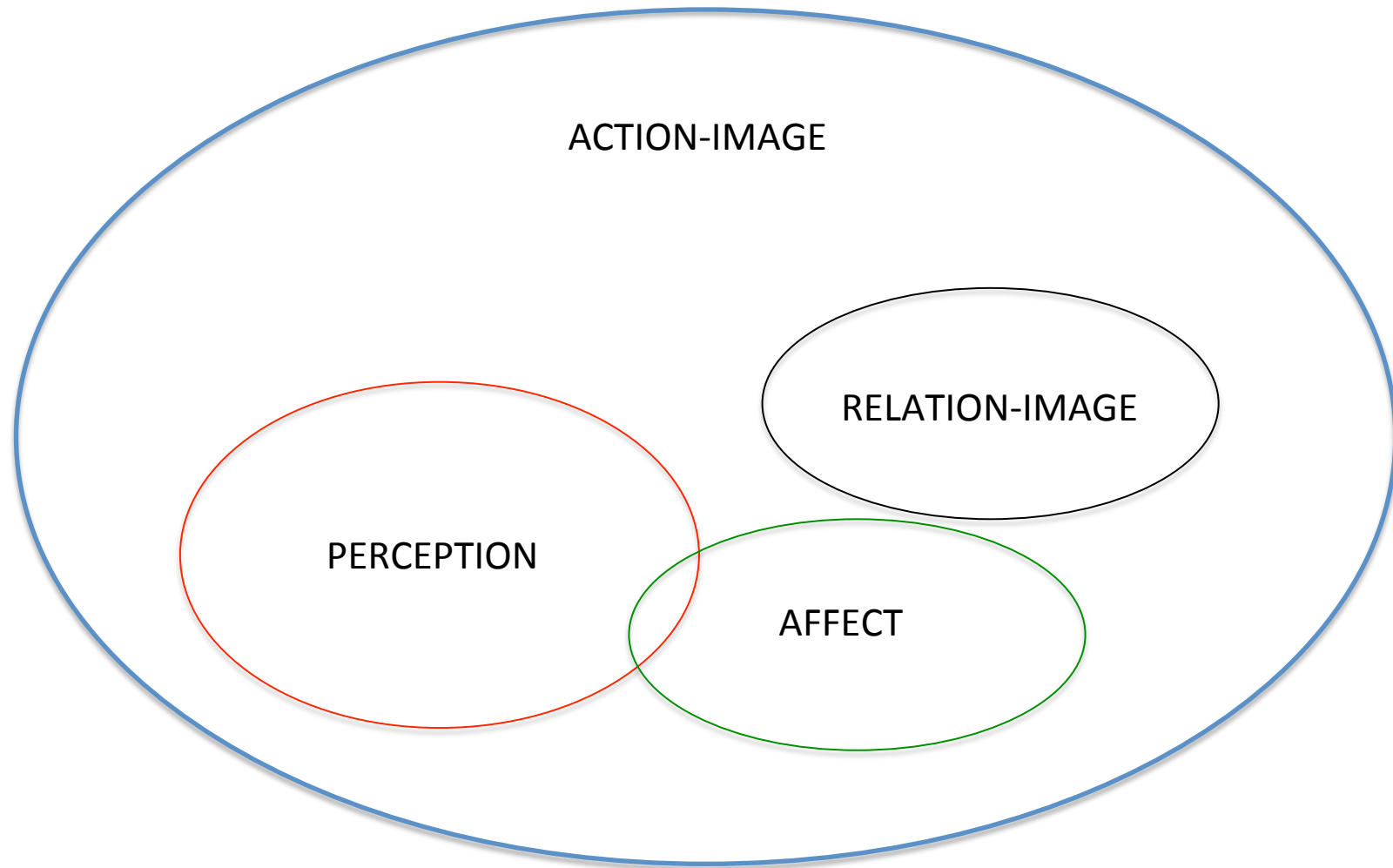


THE MULTIPLANAR IMAGE





DELEUZE: THE MOVEMENT-IMAGE



Deleuze defines the movement-image in terms of an overall subordination of perception-images, affect-images, and relation-images to the action-image. He sees such a subordination happening in different ways in the national prewar studio cinemas of France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Japan, and the USA.

In sum, in classical animation form, the ideal of 'full animation' serves to subordinate all types of images to the action-image (and thus matching on action and continuity editing) — through the overall emphasis on smooth, fluid character animation and the carefully constructed illusion of movement into depth.

So-called limited animation breaks with this movement-image...

LIMITED (OR PLANNED) ANIMATION

Limited animation uses fewer drawings per second, thereby limiting the fluidity of the animation. It involves the use of less detailed or more stylized drawings and methods of movement usually a choppy or “skippy” movement animation.

character animation: the ideal is more conceptual and emotional character design

depth: movement is a matter of sliding layers, which is to say, open compositing or ‘animetism’

1980s

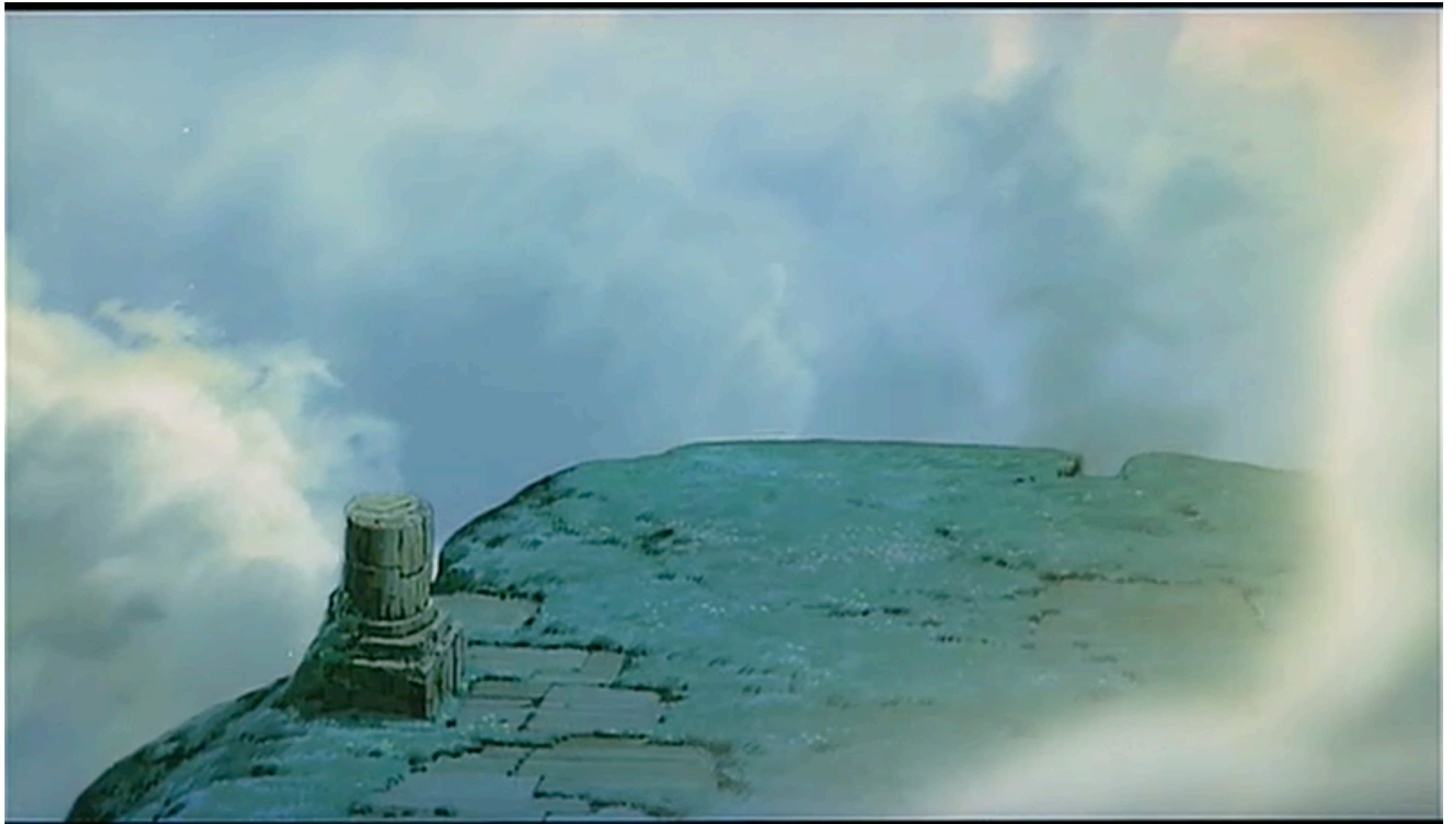
CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



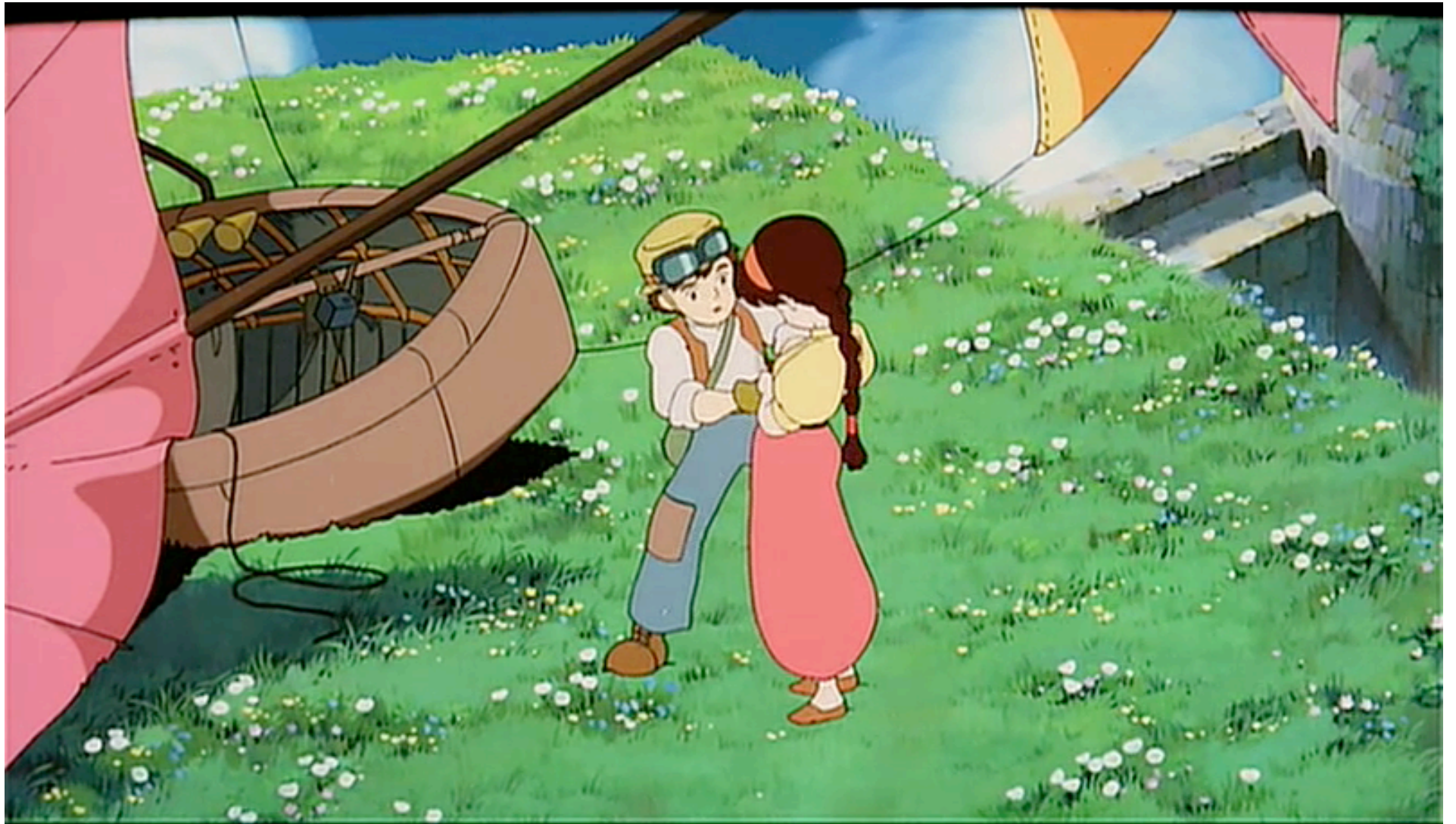
MIYAZAKI HAYAO &
STUDIO GHIBLI

“Limited Full Animation”

The ideal is full animation but
some techniques of limited
animation are used.



MIYAZAKI Hayao, *Castle in the Sky* (1985)

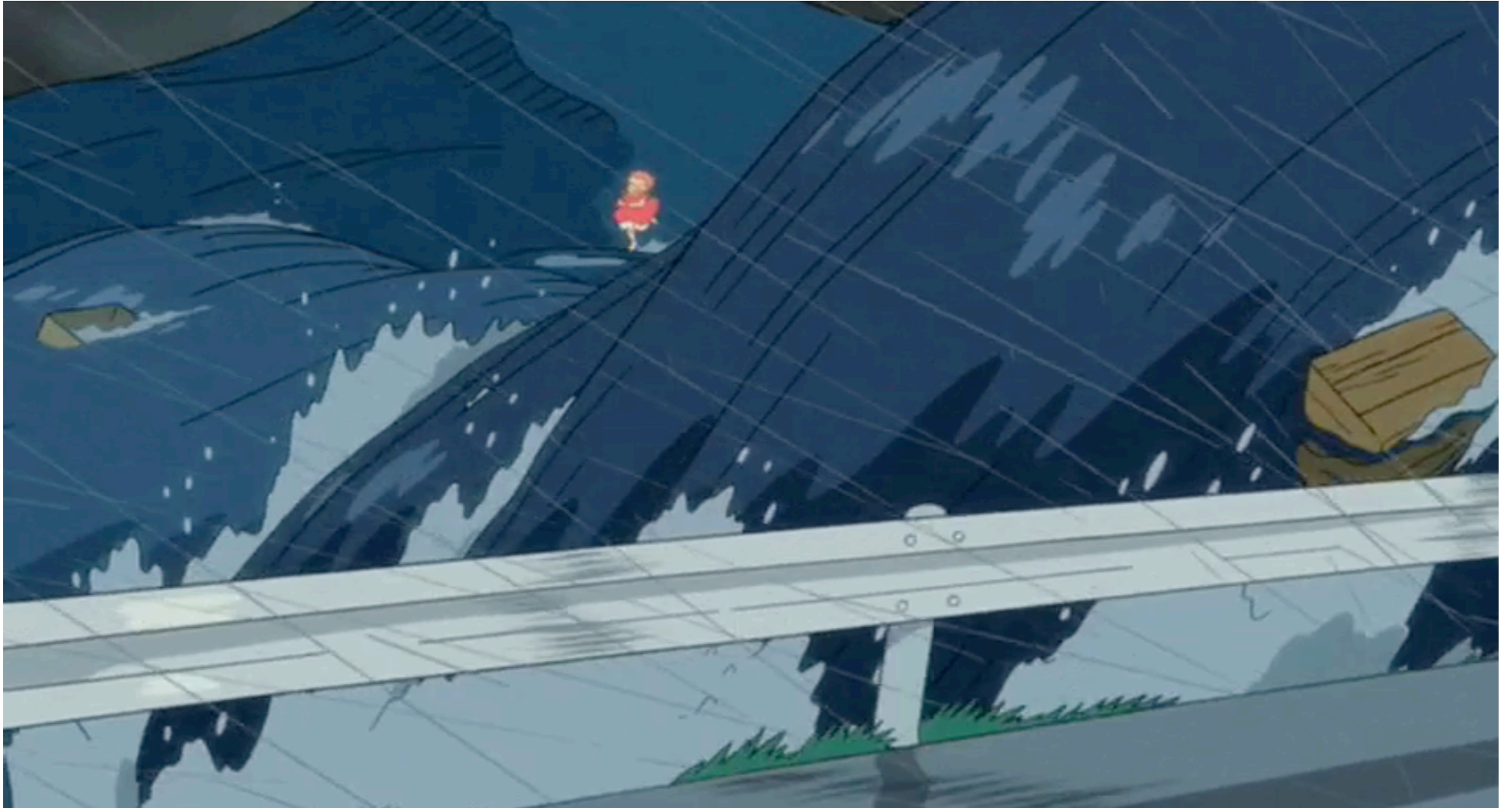


MIYAZAKI Hayao, *Castle in the Sky* (1985)



**It looks more like animation.
Animation isn't realistic.**

MIYAZAKI Hayao, *Future Boy Conan* (1978). Character Animation: OTSUKA Yasuo



MIYAZAKI Hayao, *Ponyo* (2008)

Classical animation form frequently uses super-fluid character movement to mask the multiplanar qualities of the image, that is, drawing attention away from interval between layers of the image.

Miyazaki, however, plays with the gap between layers of the image to produce a different kind of movement — sliding layers, open compositing.

But to assure that his characters don't just float around aimlessly, he uses Ōtsuka Yasuo's style of character animation — angling characters to give a feel of gravity, of weight.

Thus, even though his ideal is the cinematic movement-image, we feel something different emerging — the multiplanar image.

1980s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



TELEVISION ANIMATION
ASTRO BOY

“Limited Animation”

ANIME

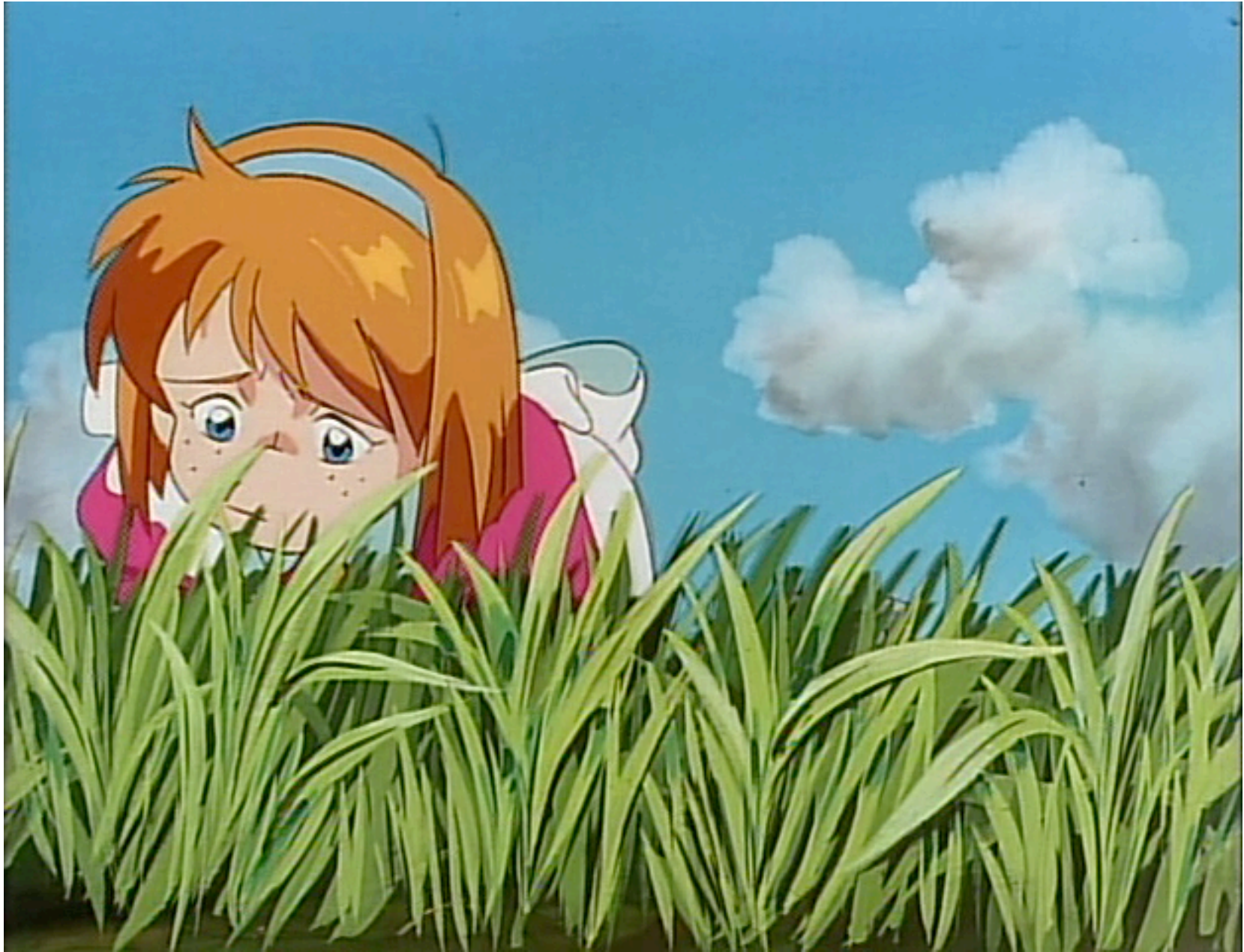
ANNŌ HIDEAKI &
GAINAX STUDIOS

“Hyper-Limited Animation”
or “Full Limited Animation”
Techniques of limited
animation are embraced
and even intensified.



**That's true. Well, you know
what they say.**

Annō Hideaki, *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Waters* (1990-91)



Annō Hideaki, *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Waters* (1990-91)



Annō Hideaki, *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Waters* (1990-91)

Dennou Coil



many cases of pets going missing

ISO Mitsuo, *Dennō Koiru*, 2007

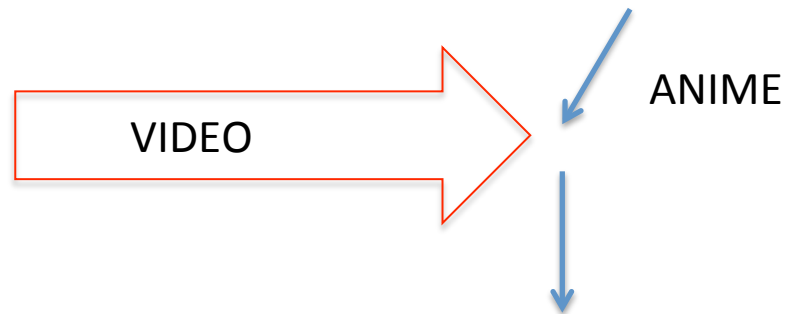
ISO Mitsuo is known for his jerky yet detailed animation, full of dense sophisticated motion. He refers to his own style as “full limited.” In traditional animation, animation with a drawing count below one drawing every two frames (or “on twos”) is considered limited animation. Mixing twos, threes and fours in a balanced form of timing, Iso draws every key frame without passing his work to an in-betweenner, allowing him full control to create the most detailed motion possible with a balanced and efficient number of drawings, hence the term “full limited.”

1980s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



“Limited Animation”



OSHII MAMORU
& I.G. PRO

Techniques of limited
animation are re-mediated
through video and graphic
interfaces.

1980s

CLASSICAL ANIMATION FORM
(TŌEI DŌGA STUDIOS)



“Limited Animation”

ANIME

ANNŌ HIDEAKI &
GAINAX STUDIOS

“Hyper-Limited Animation”
or “Full Limited Animation”
Techniques of limited
animation are embraced
and even intensified.
**Maximizing the robotic &
cybernetic**

MIYAZAKI HAYAO &
STUDIO GHIBLI

CARTOON FILM

“Limited Full Animation”

The ideal is full animation but
some techniques of limited
animation are used.

**Minimizing the robotic &
cybernetic**

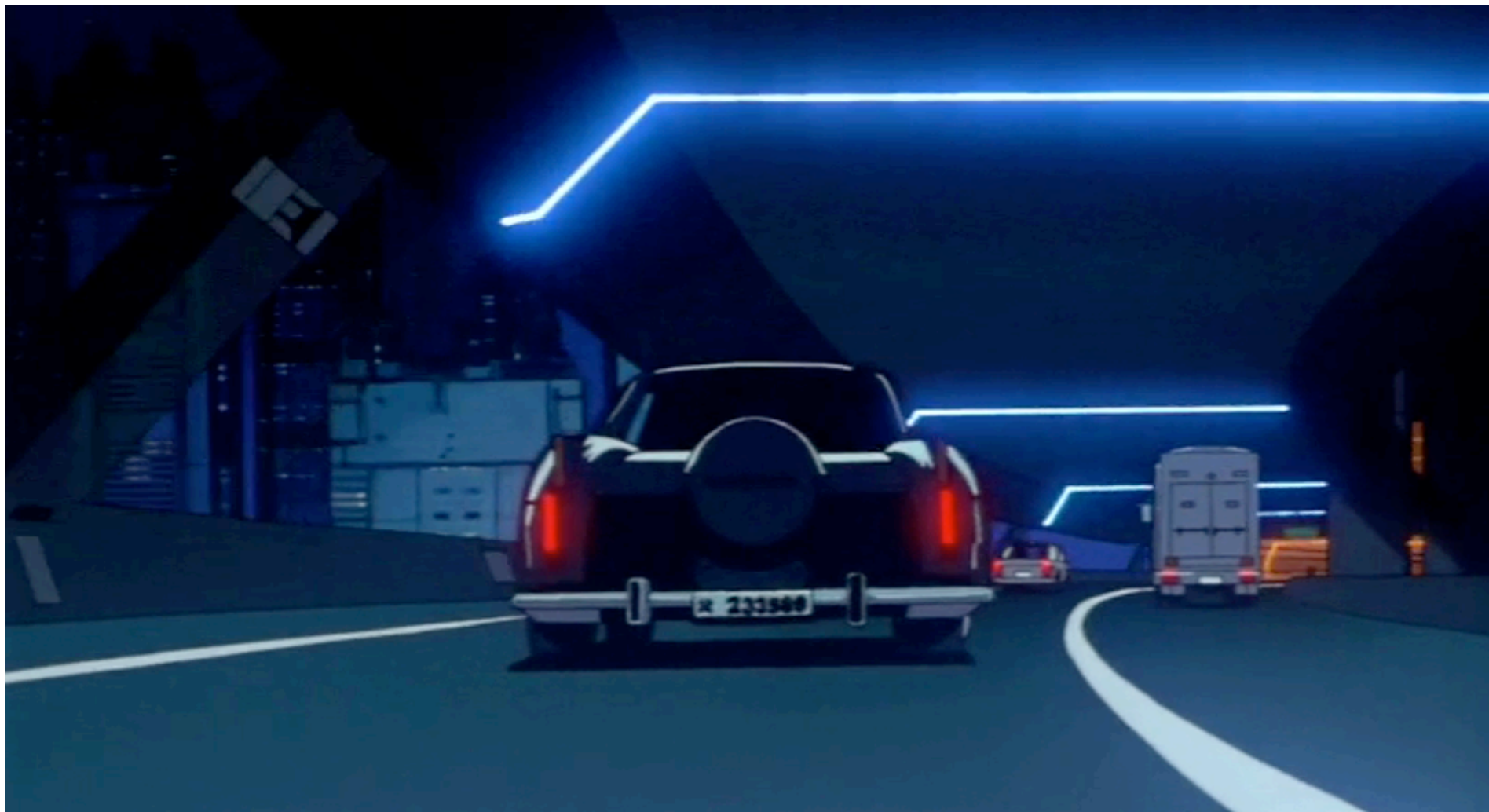
OSHII MAMORU
& I.G. PRO

Techniques of limited
animation are re-mediated
through video and graphic
interfaces.

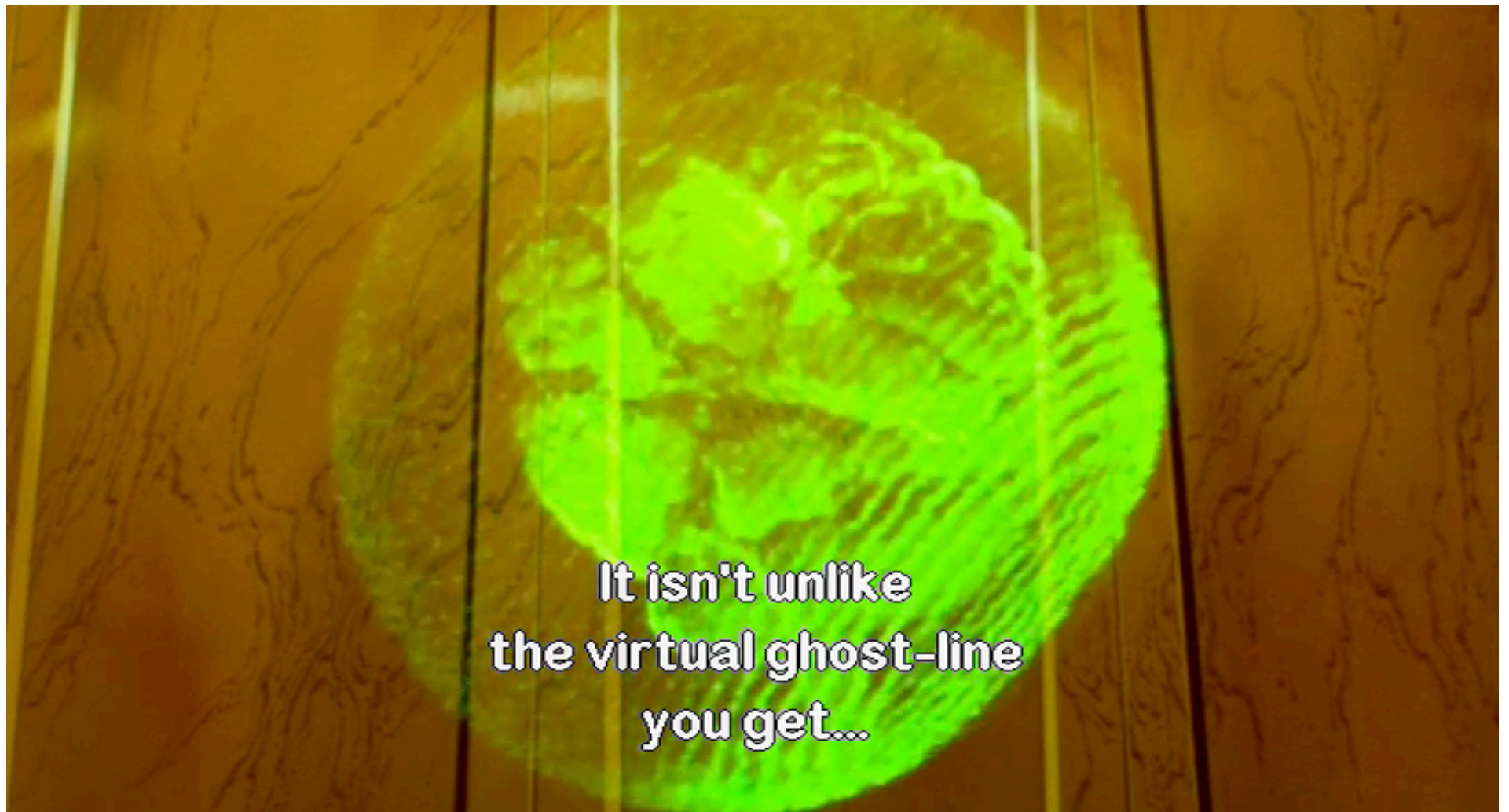
**Problematizing the robotic &
cybernetic**



Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)

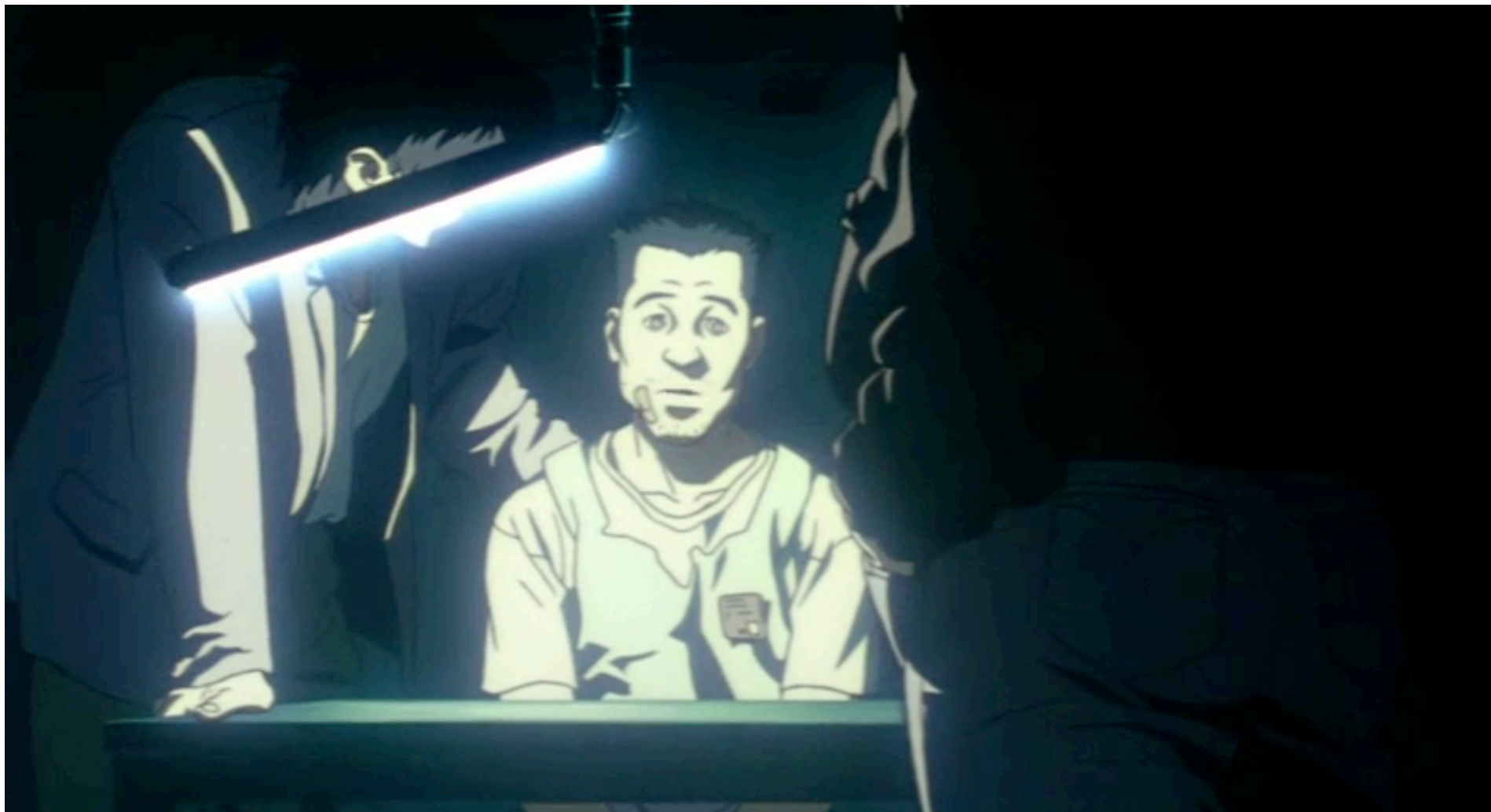


Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)



It isn't unlike
the virtual ghost-line
you get...

Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)



Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)

Oshii Mamoru, *Kōkaku kidōtai* (The Ghost in the Shell, 1995; Japan)

bodies

In “The Mulatto Cyborg: Imagining a Multiracial Future,” LeiLani Nishime (2005) is not interested in defining cyborgs or the cyberpunk genre. She argues that “...the cyborg must be read as a powerful metaphor for the historical bogeyman of contamination—racial mixing.”

“As Vivian Sobchack has pointed out, science fiction is preoccupied with the relationship between the strange and the familiar. This uncanny mixture infects the portrayal of both mixed-race people and cyborgs. It is only a short leap, then, to read anxieties about the incoherence of the body of the cyborg as a parallel to the confusion and concern that centers on the body of the multiracial human.”

She notes “...the similarities in the language used to describe cyborgs and mixed-race people. Terms such as “miscegenation” and “illegitimate” abound.”

“...the admixture of human with Other in the cyborg finds its closest racial parallel in the mixed-race body”

Parallel Series of Allegedly “Illegitimate” Hybridization or “Miscegenation”

Series 1: Human + Machine = Cyborg

And because human is so often racialized to mean white —

Series 2: White + Non-White = Mulatto

Thus, “The cyborg offers a safe space in which to explore the controversial issues surrounding multiracial identity.”

She explores three scenarios for cyborgs:

BAD, GOOD, and MULATTO

BAD CYBORG

The bad cyborg plays on xenophobic fears of mechanical domination, inviting the audience to recoil from the bodily invasion of machine into man.

The viewer, who has become accustomed to a character with a human face, is suddenly confronted with the mechanical infrastructure that lies just beneath the skin.

Within a cultural logic that equates human with white European, this simplistic conception of cyborgs most closely follows the infamous “one-drop” rule.

These versions of cyborgs replay anachronistic fears of miscegenation in another key way: the cyborgs’ plan for the violent and absolute overthrow of humanity echoes the most extreme segregationist rhetoric.

There is one way in which the bad cyborg can be redeemed: by sacrificing of himself and his kind to humans. The cyborgs of both *The Terminator* and *Alien* come back reformed and domesticated in the sequels.

GOOD CYBORG

Like the redeemed cyborgs discussed above, the good cyborg does not want to eliminate humans. He wants to be human. Neither human nor machine, he is doomed to an eternal search for belonging. Two of the more compelling examples are the replicants in *Blade Runner* and David in the Spielberg-Kubrick collaboration, *A.I.* Both creatures are examples of a crucial subset of cyborgs, androids.

So, although the good cyborg may dream of the liberal humanist's malleable, disembodied self, he awakens to a criminalized body.

The good cyborg perfectly replicates the stereotype of the tragic mulatto/a.

In the end, both *Blade Runner* and *A.I.* retreat from the liberatory potential of the passing narrative. The good cyborg fails to achieve his dream of a boundless, borderless future because it is caught in multiple layers of nostalgia.

Despite the critical celebration afforded *Blade Runner*, humanness/whiteness remains a central organizing principle of its narrative. This explains the cyborgs' obsession with assimilation and passing. That they would rather be human is a given.

MULATTO CYBORG

...unlike the good cyborg, the mulatto cyborg is stripped of romanticism and nostalgia. He mocks the liberal humanist invitation to pass as human. He cannot access the coherent identity promised by an embrace of the real, so he cobbles together the fragmentary self required of life in the imaginary.

Instead of suppressing hybridity or retreating from it, as the bad cyborg and good cyborg do respectively, the mulatto cyborg in *RoboCop* unflinchingly confronts and exposes hybridity. RoboCop is the reconstruction of good-guy policeman Murphy (Peter Weller).

RoboCop's/Murphy's subjectivity most closely resembles that of Anzaldúa's celebrated *mestiza*, who rejects any essentialist or reductionist singular identity.

Unlike the bad cyborg, RoboCop, the mulatto cyborg, is not a man split off from a machine. There is no battle between his mechanical self and his "true" human self. When he removes his helmet, he un.masks his robotic exterior and reveals the hybrid beneath; there is neither an essential biological self that must be recovered nor a robot self to defeat. He can neither escape his techno body to "return" to disembodied memory nor mourn the prelapsarian origin that would authenticate his identity. By leaving the interface between skin and metal exposed, RoboCop/Murphy makes passing as either human or machine impossible.

KUSANAGI MOTOKO

Is she a bad, good, or mulatto cyborg?

What of the Puppet Master?

What of their 'fusion'?