

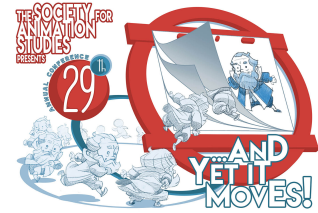
Panel H3

Sala Emiciclo

Discourses on Animation Authors

Ai-Ting Chung

Consuming Reality in Kon Satoshi's *Paranoia Agent*



The anime director Kon Satoshi (今敏, 1963-2010) is known for directing full-length animated features, including *Perfect Blue* (1997), *Millennium Actress* (2001), *Tokyo Godfather* (2003), and *Paprika* (2006). Seeking a longer format to present his ideas, Kon turned to TV series. The proposal seeks to study Kon's 2004 TV series *Paranoia Agent* (妄想代理人) to examine the new form of reality and narrative constructed within the anime, discuss how different media shape and/or respond to each other, and map how the different layers of media capture and reflect the psyche of the contemporary society by addressing the observation of Azuma Hiroki (東浩紀) on the issue of “anime/manga-like Realism” in the “database-model world”. As Azuma argues in his study of otaku subculture, this particular group seem to disconnect with the society are the ones that actively search for new form to be engaged in the society. Azuma introduces this kind of neo-social perception as the “database-model world” in which we are no longer determined through narratives; instead, we consume narratives. Namely, we constantly live in simulacra where reality is drawn on our reading of it and therefore it constructs our fluid identities.

Gerald Figal has discussed in “Monstrous Media and Delusional Consumption in Kon Satoshi's *Paranoia Agent*” the relationship of consumerism and otaku fandom with Marshall McLuhan's insight into media. Instead of viewing otaku as social monsters and threat, I would like to build upon Figal's reading by reconsidering how the database-modeling users reconnect to society and how the detachment the anime/manga-like Realism shapes new meanings for the cinema.

Paranoia Agent introduces the delusion of Tsukiko Sagi (鷺月子), a young designer of a popular “cute” character (癒しキャラ) Maromi, who claims that she was attacked by a figure later called Shōnen Batto (少年バット). Consumed by mass communication, the figure Shōnen Batto triggers a series of incidents. The series of incidents happens because people consume the narratives, creating their own variations. Reading the world through media creates a comfortable distance for readers to post comments without feeling guilty or involved, but this kind of consuming narratives is in fact immersive and influential. The media in *Paranoia Agent*—including the opening song, the TV news, the Maromi anime, the RPG, and the Shōwa period cinematic dream place—serve not only as a vehicle for the reality that we live in, but a fantasy playground for the simulacrum of the reality.

Biography

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I am a graduate student in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in National Chiao Tung University. I have taken the courses of *Making Meaning in Three Asian Cinemas*, *Postcolonial Women's Fiction*, *Semiotics and Psychoanalysis*, and

Cyborgs, Cybernetics, and Cyberpunk. The papers I have written on these courses include “Japanese trauma in Kurosawa Akira’s *Stray Dog* and Kurosawa Kiyoshi’s *Cure*,” “Diaspora and Home in Jade Y. Chen’s *Mazu’s Bodyguard* and Yung-Shan Tsou’s *Waiting Room*,” “Object a. and the Desire in Pedro Almodovar’s *Matador* and *Law of Desire*,” and “Subjectivity and Humanity in the Creature of Mary Shelly’s *Frankenstein*.” I also have had a poster presentation on the topic of “Two Examples of Cyborg Identity Crisis from Japanese Pulp Culture: *Serial Experiments Lain* & *Malice@Doll*.” These courses and experiences help me to gain my interest in formation and transformation of subjectivity in diasporic cultures and build my inter-discipline on literary theories, visual culture and cultural studies. I am highly interested in subjectivity formation, especially in the contemporary, during which people are immersed in the digital age, forming new hybridized identity in cyberspace. Recently, I am working on the project of Kon Satoshi’s anime, seeking the cultural reflection within the anime fantasy.