

**Reflections on the Subtitling and Dubbing of Anime:
The Translation of Gender in *Perfect Blue*,
a Film by Kon Satoshi**

by

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Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
Doctorate in Philosophy Degree in Translation Studies

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Abstract

Perfect Blue is an anime (Japanese animation) film directed by Kon Satoshi released in 1997. The film revolves around a female *idol* (a pop star) named Mima who quits her career as an *idol* to become an actress. She gradually loses her mind, as the pressures from her acting career, her managers, fans and a stalker catch up to her. *Perfect Blue* touches on the blurring line between fiction and reality, the objectification of women (and *idols*) as mere products, and the role of women in the *idol* industry. It is also a stark critique of the hegemonic masculinity and the gender roles that are imposed on women in Japanese society. This thesis presents anime as an important pop culture phenomenon with a massive influence worldwide. The thesis examines the gender stereotypes propagated by this phenomenon and proposes a that Kon's work is different compared to other anime. This work compares how gender roles are portrayed in the different versions: The Japanese original and the US English subtitles and dubbing. Methodologically, the analysis relies on close observation of the use of the Japanese first and second person pronouns and sentence-final particles in the characters' language, since "the use of these features is known to be highly gender-dependent" (Hiramoto 2013, 55).

This study comes to the conclusion that the subtitles and the dubbing provide a relatively close rendering of gender of the Japanese text, even if the linguistic resources of English do not allow for the translation of gendered Japanese pronouns and sentence-final particles. This means that the subtitles and dubbings maintain the feminist message Kon wanted to give in his film. The study concludes by stressing the importance of taking into account the use of specific pronouns and sentence-final particles when translating Japanese,

as these particles are gender-loaded. It also emphasises the importance of being critical of anime's hegemonic masculinity, and argues that Kon goes against hegemony by portraying a strong and independent female character.

Keywords: Anime, Kon Satoshi, Perfect Blue, audiovisual translation, gender, masculine hegemony

Works Cited

“*Hey, You’re a Girl?*” Gendered Expressions in the Popular Anime, *Cowboy Bebop*”.
Multilingua 32.1 (2013): 51–78. Print.

Résumé

Perfect Blue est un anime —film d’animation japonais— réalisé par Kon Satoshi et paru en 1997 ; il relate l’histoire d’une *idole* (vedette féminine de la musique pop) du nom de Mima, qui met un terme à sa carrière de chanteuse pour devenir actrice. Elle perd peu à peu la raison sous la pression accumulée de sa carrière d’actrice, ses agents et ses fans, ainsi que d’un harceleur. *Perfect Blue* traite ainsi du brouillage de la frontière entre réalité et fiction, de l’objectification des femmes (en particulier des *idoles*) et de leur transformation en produits de consommation, ainsi que de la part que l’on réserve aux femmes dans cette industrie de l’*idole*. La présente thèse décrit d’abord l’ampleur du phénomène culturel qu’est l’anime tout comme son influence dans le monde ; viennent ensuite l’examen des stéréotypes genrés véhiculés par ce phénomène et la proposition selon laquelle l’œuvre de Kon les exploite de manière unique. Elle étudie également le sous-titrage et le doublage du film en anglais états-unien, examen ayant pour but premier de comparer la représentation des rôles genrés à travers ces différentes versions, soit l’original japonais et ses traductions en anglais états-unien. Sur le plan méthodologique, l’analyse se fonde notamment sur l’observation de l’usage des pronoms de la première et de la deuxième personne ainsi que des particules en fin de phrase dans le discours des personnages, puisque « the use of these features is known to be highly gender-dependent » (« l’utilisation de ces traits est dictée directement par le genre »). (Hiramoto 2013, 55) .

Cette étude permet de conclure que les versions sous-titrée et doublée du film offrent un rendu des rôles genrés assez fidèle à l’original, malgré que les ressources linguistiques de l’anglais ne permettent de traduire du japonais ni les pronoms ni les particules employées en

fin de phrase. Ainsi, il est possible d'affirmer que les sous-titres et le doublage du film parviennent à préserver le message féministe que Kon souhaite inscrire dans l'œuvre d'origine. La thèse se conclut par une étude de l'importance de tenir compte des pronoms et des particules spécifiques dans le cadre d'une traduction faite à partir du japonais, puisque ces éléments sont chargés de signification en lien avec le genre (« gender »). Elle souligne également l'importance de la critique de l'hégémonie masculine mise en scène dans l'anime de manière générale, et suggère que Kon se place à contrecourant de cette même hégémonie par le biais d'un personnage féminin fort et indépendant.

Mots-clés : Anime, Kon Satoshi, Perfect Blue, traduction audiovisuelle, gender, hégémonie masculine

Ouvrages cités

“*Hey, You’re a Girl?*” Gendered Expressions in the Popular Anime, *Cowboy Bebop*”.
Multilingua 32.1 (2013): 51–78. Imprimé.

概要

パーフェクトブルーは1997年に今敏によって制作された日本のアニメ映画である。作品は未麻(みま)というアイドルとしてのキャリアを諦め、女優を目指す彼女を中心に巡っていく。女優業やマネージャー、またファンやストーカー等からのプレッシャーに耐えきれず、彼女は徐々に自分を見失っていく。パーフェクトブルーは現実とフィクションの曖昧な境界線や、女性(やアイドル)の物理的なものとしての象徴的概念、アイドル業界に置ける女性の役割等を論じている。また覇権的男性性や日本社会における女性に課される性別的役割についての明白な批評である。

この論文では世界中に影響を与えるアニメを重要なポップカルチャーの事象として提示し、これにより普及したジェンダーステレオタイプについて考察、今氏の作品がどう違うものか提案している。またアメリカ英語版字幕と吹き替えについて詮索している。ここでは、原作版とアメリカ英語訳版を比較し、性別的役割にどのような違いがあるかに焦点をおいている。「これら一人称・二人称、キャラクターの終助詞の使い方等は性別による」(Hiramoto 2013, 55) とあり、これらに注目し考察している。

本研究では、英語の言語的性質が日本語の代名詞や終助詞を訳せないものの、字幕と吹き替えは原文の意味と比較的近い翻訳を成しているという結論にたどり着く。要するにこれら字幕と吹き替えは今氏が伝えたかったフェミニスト的メッセージが残っているということである。また特定の代名詞や終助詞は性別的要素を含んでいるものが多く、日本語翻訳時にはこれらの重要性が高まってくると結論づ

けることができる。更に本研究ではアニメでの覇権的男性性に批判的であることの重要性を強調しており、強い、自立した女性を描くことによって覇権(ヘゲモニー)に反対する態度を示していると論ずる。

キーワード: アニメ、今敏、パーフェクトブルー、視聴覚翻訳、性差、覇権的男性性

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Hiramoto, Mie. “Hey, You’re a Girl?” Gendered expressions in the popular anime, *Cowboy Bebop*”. *Multilingua* 32.1 (2013): 51–78. Print.

Resumen

Perfect Blue es una película de anime (animación japonesa), dirigida por Kon Satoshi y estrenada en 1997. La película gira alrededor de una *idol* (una estrella pop) llamada Mima, quien deja su carrera para convertirse en actriz. Sin embargo, Mima se vuelve loca debido a la presión ejercida sobre ella en su nueva carrera, sus agentes, seguidores y un acosador. *Perfect Blue* trata las difusas líneas entre la ficción y la realidad, la cosificación de la mujer (y las *idols*) como meros productos y el rol de la mujer en la industria de los *idol*. La película también es una ácida crítica a la hegemonía masculina y a los roles de género que son impuestos a la mujer en la sociedad japonesa. Esta tesis presenta el anime como un importantísimo fenómeno de la cultura *pop* que posee una gran influencia en todo el mundo. La tesis examina los estereotipos de género promovidos por este fenómeno y propone que la obra de Kon es diferente con respecto a la mayoría del anime. La tesis además explora los subtítulos y el doblaje al inglés de los EEUU. Por medio de esta exploración se examina cómo los diferentes roles de género se exhiben en las diferentes versiones: en el original japonés y en las traducciones al inglés estadounidense. La metodología se basa en la observación del uso de los pronombres de primera y segunda persona y las partículas utilizadas al final de la oración del idioma japonés, ya que «the use of these features is known to be highly gender-dependent» («se sabe que el uso de estos rasgos lingüísticos está muy ligados al género del hablante») (Hiramoto 2013, 55).

La investigación llega a la conclusión de que los subtítulos y el doblaje tienen una representación de género cercana del texto japonés, aunque los recursos lingüísticos del inglés no permiten que el género de los pronombres y las partículas utilizadas al final de la

oración se puedan traducir. Esto quiere decir que los subtítulos y el doblaje mantienen el mensaje feminista que Kon quería promover en su película. El estudio concluye enfatizando la importancia de tomar en cuenta el uso de los pronombres y las partículas utilizadas al final de la oración al traducir al japonés, ya que estas últimas tienen su propio género. Además, se critica la hegemonía masculina que tiene la mayoría del anime y se argumenta que Kon va en contra de esa hegemonía al retratar a un personaje femenino fuerte e independiente.

Palabras claves: Anime, Kon Satoshi, Perfect Blue, traducción audiovisual, género, hegemonía masculina

Obras citadas

“*Hey, You’re a Girl?*” Gendered Expressions in the Popular Anime, *Cowboy Bebop*”.
Multilingua 32.1 (2013): 51–78. Impreso.

Acknowledgments

There have been many special people who have come and gone during the writing this dissertation. I first of all, wish to thank all my professors at the University of Ottawa, as they have encouraged me to continue my research. I would also like to thank Furukawa Hiroko, from Tohoku Gakuin University (as well as the staff there who always chatted with me, especially Nakamura-san), whose guidance in Sendai provided inspiration not only during my stay in Japan, but after it. The same goes to my colleagues at uOttawa. Maryam Mohammadi was of great help during the initial stages of the PhD, scanning articles for me that I wouldn't have access to. Thank you for hanging out with me. I also thank Marta Stelmaszak for showing me what real discipline looks like, and for our time together. Paul Birt, a real gentleman full of sarcasm and wit, you truly have become not only a mentor for me, but also a really good friend. Diolch! Thanks to Agatha Schwartz and cutesy Milou as well, your smiles warm my heart.

Dr Chen y Georgina Dengo, gracias por cuidarme todos estos años. Rocío Miranda, Sherry Gapper y D. Carlos se les agradece su guía durante mi largo tiempo en la Universidad Nacional. Patrick Zabalbeascoa ha sido una gran fuente de apoyo durante los últimos años, ¡un fuerte abrazo! 実とたくちゃん, 僕の一番友達すわあーん

Daniella, Yoshua, Pablo y Cendry, gracias por instruirme respecto al buen gusto en el cine y ser unos excelentes compas. Leila and Niki «Nicolette», you are a constant source of joy in my life. I am proud to be your friends. Few people work as hard as you. Respect.

I must also thank Luise Juhnke, Mariana Sánchez Carranza and Nabey Zih Sánchez González whose work in transcribing the film's scenes in English was of tremendous value.

Major salutations go to Tomita Ai-ちゃん. Thank you so much for being a good friend, and for helping me out so very much with the Japanese scenes. I am eternally in your debt.

Bértold Salas Murillo ha sido una gran amistad, fuente de apoyo pero sobre todo guía durante todos estos años. Lo quiero mucho, «mop», muchísimas gracias por todo.

Sophie Ouabbou, sos una persona increíble, una poeta y médica llena de talento; me alegra y me llena muchísimo contar con tu amistad.

Juan Carlos and Roberto Saravia... I blame you for this! Alas, if you hadn't been such amazing professors of Japanese all those years ago, I wouldn't be here. Your support all this time, through my ups and downs, is something I will always be grateful for. 本当にありがとう。 And naturally Kikuchi Yuki for his tremendous effort in translating my abstract into Japanese, and Valerie Milner for doing so into French. ありがとう! Merci!

Thanks to [Nisus Writer Pro](#), a sturdy and reliable word processor that never failed me.

Christian Dávila Amador, Fabricio León «Yee», Steven Pranger, and Jorge Rivera Marín, you are my brothers, my soulmates, and an integral part of me. Without you I wouldn't be where I am; you are always there for me, for reasons that confuse me. I love you. I must give special thanks to Jorge, whose editing of this work has not only made it better stylistically, but has greatly improved its content and readability. Thank you so much!

I must also give particular thanks to Shaily Zolfaghari, whose help during the final stages of the PhD will always be remembered. You are truly a shining pharos in the sea, and I would not have been able to finish this PhD without your help. Preciousss!

Infinite thanks go to my family. Tía, Tío, Carlos and Theis, Tío Ale et al., Avalon and Liam, Uncle David and Bobby thank you for all your support and specially for all your

smiles. Sylvia and Irene, my dear sisters, you are the most important persons in my life, and I know that the world is a better place because you are in it.

I must profusely thank my thesis examiners, Ryan Fraser, Marc Charron, and especially Kyle Conway and Markus Nornes. Your feedback and suggestions for the thesis greatly improved the final product, and I am honoured that you were my examiners. Thank you so much! Marc Charron is also a good colleague and friend. I have enjoyed our beers together. Viva Montréal! Luise von Flotow, my supervisor, decided to take me under her wing, and I cannot express in words how thankful I am for her patience, help and kindness during the entire process. I cannot think of a better supervisor, and I have grown not only as a person, but also as a scholar, thanks to you. Vielen herzlichen Dank!!!

今 敏 (Kon Satoshi): Where to start? Your early death was a terrible loss to humanity, but your message lives on through all your work. You have made a huge impact in my life. This thesis is the least I can do to thank you for all that you have given to me.

Several bands provided a soundtrack for the writing of this thesis; thank you to Dark Tranquillity, my favourite band and a constant source of inspiration and critical thinking, Depeche Mode, Nujabes (RIP), Hirasawa Susumu, The Gathering, Arcturus, Bach, Laibach, Rhapsody, and a long etcetera.

And last—but most certainly not least—my parents; the most patient and supportive persons ever. You have always been there having my back loving me. Dad, you are so funny, sensitive and smart. You are always there for me, a loving person that, to this day, always teaches me something new every day. Má, usted es una persona increíble. Su sonrisa es como un sol que brilla en la noche, un alma pura que es imposible no adorar. Siempre caritativa y pensando en los demás. I am incredibly lucky, and a better person thanks to you.

Mum and Dad, I dedicate this to you. I love you.

Má y Pá, éste trabajo es para ustedes. Los amo.

And to the memory of Kon Satoshi.

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Introduction

In 2001, I was sitting at the now-defunct cultural centre *El Semáforo*, near the University of Costa Rica. The host of the first-ever anime gathering in the country was about to ask the attendees trivia questions, and I eagerly awaited one query in particular. He then said the words I somehow knew he was going to utter: “who is the director of *Tōkyō Godfathers?*” I sprang up from my chair, my heart beating fast, and I yelled: “Satoshi Kon!” I won a prize, a small figurine of a pirate from the video game *Maximus*. 12 years later, I am writing a thesis on the first film directed by Kon, *Perfect Blue* (1997).

My project seeks to bring attention to the area of anime translation in Translation Studies. I want to move the direction of study away from the current trend of analysing anime primarily in a merely practical sense (e.g. by analysing subtitling and dubbing), to one that concentrates on gender issues in anime and how these are reflected through the subtitles and dubbing. My work, then, focuses on the role of anime in the expansion and dissemination of specific Japanese gender-portrayals, and the changes that occur—if any—when anime is translated or localised into the US market.

For the purpose of this thesis I have also chosen to concentrate mostly on female characters in anime, as this feature heavily in Kon’s films. The manner in which Kon portrays female characters in his films is also quite atypical, especially when compared to most of anime, as will be shown in this work. In the majority of series and films in this medium, most female characters are usually clumsy women working for men, or one specific man, usually the character’s *onii-san* (big brother) (Section 2.2.5.). Other times they are sexualised and often endowed with magical powers (Section 2.2.3.). And yet the female characters in Kon’s

films, however, are very different. They are intelligent, scientific and independent women.

In the case of the film analysed in this dissertation, *Perfect Blue*, the main character, Kirigoe Mima (henceforth Mima), is a Japanese pop *idol*. An *idol* in Japan can be a man or woman, but the most popular ones are women; in this thesis I discuss women *idols* exclusively. An *idol* is a commodity, a performer who rarely composes music of her own, and is repackaged and resold to audiences, as if she were a toy in a box. *Idols* are pop stars that seem to live only for their fans. In *Perfect Blue*, Mima is an *idol* who decides, by herself, to quit her *idol* career and become an actress; however, a series of unfortunate events, along with self-doubt and loathing, make Mima become deranged. *Perfect Blue* has a very atypical portrayal of women in anime, as it is Mima, on her own, who decides to stop being an *idol* and become an actress. I expand on this aspect of anime in Section 2.

Another reason why I have pursued this project is to address the fact that the Japanese language itself is a gendered one, in a social and linguistic sense (this is explained in section 2.5. and 2.6.). This means that, for example, women use specific verbs, First Person Pronouns (1PPs), Second Person Pronouns (2PPs), sentence final particles (SFPs), whilst men use different ones. I deal with this in Section 2.5. In this thesis I concentrate on these linguistic aspects of the film's *yakuwarigo* (role language or scripted speech), and analyse how these were translated in the subtitled and dubbed versions of the films. The analysis is carried out in order to see if the gender roles expressed in the Japanese source text are maintained in translation.

Hence, not only are the gender portrayals that are displayed in this film—as will be shown throughout this work—quite different from the ones observed in the majority of anime, but the specific, gendered language used by Mima (the film's main character) in this

film is one that is different from the standard one employed by the majority of female characters in anime (as I show in sections 2.5. and 2.6.). The translation of this film's distinctive gendered language, and how it affects the film's gender portrayals, are part of the investigation. Herein lies the value of this film: It is different not only in its filmic aspect, but also in its gender portrayals and the language used in it.

In this thesis I hope to advance theories relating to gender and society in anime, and how gender is portrayed in translation by analysing the changes (if any) made in the subtitles and dubbing, compared to the Japanese script. It is my hope that this thesis will be a critique of the translation of gender and of anime that will encourage further research in this area.

Hence, The research questions for this project are:

1. How is gender portrayed in the language of the anime film *Perfect Blue*, and in its translations into English via the official subtitles and official dubbing?
1. How do these methods of translation differ in regard to gender portrayals?

* * *

This thesis consists of a total of five chapters. Chapter I provides an introduction to the thesis' topic, starting first with a definition of anime, and a presentation of Kon's various releases. I also delve in detail into questions of gender in *Perfect Blue*, as it is a film that—as will be shown in this work—does not follow the normative representations of women in anime.

Chapter II offers a discussion of gender in the context of this thesis, comparing and contrasting the gender theories of Japan with those of the “West”, with Judith Butler (1999, 2005) and Joan Wallach Scott (1996) as the theoretical core of this section. This section also includes an analysis of the hegemonic gender portrayals found in *shōjo*, *mahō shōjo*, and *shōnen* anime, and a comparison of these genres with the work of Kon. Furthermore, it deals with the linguistic characteristics of the Japanese language, concentrating on the gendered aspects of the language, as well as including a section on *yakuwarigo*, the role language or scripted speech a film has. This section also provides examples of the clichéd language used in anime, and compares it to the language used in *Perfect Blue*. It also scrutinises the role of anime as a media phenomenon. The section concludes by explaining gender in translation (mainly dealing with the work of von Flotow 2007, 2011), and eventually moving on into a discussion of gender in AVT, with Feral (2014) and von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2017) as the core theoretical basis.

Chapter III focuses on audiovisual translation (AVT). I first provide a definition of the field, and then move into subtitling by reviewing the theories of Jorge Díaz-Cintas, Luis Pérez-González and Markus Nornes. I also give a brief history of dubbing based on Nornes’ work. Once I have established the theoretical background for my analysis, I deal with the translation of anime.

Chapter IV starts with the specific methodologies employed in this thesis, describing the procedures used for the analysis of the film. I then proceed to analyse *Perfect Blue* from the perspective of gender in translation, concentrating on the 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs and how these were translated in the subtitles and dubbing.

Chapter V arrives at some unexpected and compelling conclusions about the translation of gender in *Perfect Blue*, and the role of anime in the dissemination of gender portrayals. I provide a summary of the project and suggest further areas of exploration between anime and translation studies.

Chapter I:

Anime, More than Mere “Cartoons”

“The industry is shit, it’s the medium that’s great” - Lauren Bacall¹

1.0. Anime

Anime, in the simplest of definitions, is animation created in Japan. In Japan, the term “anime” refers to all types of animation, not just the Japanese variety, yet outside of Japan it specifically refers to animation done in Japan (Condry 2013, 17; Napier 2001, 3). Inside Japan, anime (in the “Western” sense) is called “Japanese animation”, “Japananime” or “*Nihon no anime*” (“anime from Japan”). Anime is “a phenomenon of popular culture” (Napier 2001, 3), and an immense one. In anime “much (some would argue most) of its products are short-lived, rising and falling due to popular taste and the demands of the hungry market place” (ibid). Anime is so ubiquitous that it is the most successful type of animation on the planet, as “60% of the animation done worldwide is anime done in Japan” (Goto-Jones 2009, 3), “with the ratio in Europe exceeding 80%” (Nakamura and Onouchi 2006, 30). Anime is aired every day on Japanese TV, with high-budget films shown at, primarily, Japanese cinemas, (but more frequently outside of Japan today, e.g. in China or the United States), and is easily found online. Anime has risen to be a powerful global media.

From the 1960s until the late 1970s, there were, arguably, no new audiovisual products (AVPs) from Japan transmitted on major broadcast outlets in the US, unlike the situation in Europe, where localised versions of anime were highly popular throughout the

¹ Bacall, Lauren, Scene by Scene, BBC Television 2000.

1970s (Ruh 2010, 33). From the 1980s onward, anime and animation in general experienced a massive surge in popularity in the US, Europe and Latin America. Thomas Lamarre, professor of East Asian studies at McGill University² and one of the foremost anime experts in the world, explains that Japanese animation gained new visibility around the world with the meteoric rise of animation within the global media in the 1990s, “awkwardly clumped around the rubric ‘anime’” (2009, xxii). This happened mainly due to the “1980s broadcast of *Robotech*” (1985) in the United States (Nornes 2007, 194). Nornes explains that most animation before *Robotech* was very superficial and did not get fans’ attention, as “for most US fans there is no ‘anime’ before this, only ‘animation’ they could care less about” (ibid 194).

Since Japan is by far the world’s largest producer of animation, it can truly be said that Japan was not simply “a part” of animation’s new visibility and popularity, but that it actually *caused* said popularity (Lamarre 2009, xxii). Anime has become so relevant and ubiquitous, that studies of animation must (or should) consistently mention anime. It has become an integral part of and influence on animation worldwide.

² <<http://people.mcgill.ca/thomas.lamarre/>>.

1.0.1. The economics of anime

Money makes the man.

- Aristodemus of Sparta³

Over the years, anime creators have developed a wide array of sub-genres aimed at different viewers. Some of these genres are, for example, *mecha* (giant robots), *hentai* (pornography), *shōjo* (anime for girls, ages 10-18⁴), and *shōnen* (anime for boys, ages 10-18⁵). The result is a huge thematic diversity, together with a monstrous, inter-media propaganda machine that works horizontally with many products, e.g. toys, cards, and videogames. It also works vertically in a social sense, going from the fans that create *dōjinshi*⁶ at the bottom, to the company CEOs that run the game at the top. For instance, Ian Condry,⁷ professor in anthropology at MIT, a specialist in Japanese pop culture, explains that “a vast array of licensed merchandise depends on anime characters [as well], characters born in manga, but also in videogames, light novels, and even TV commercials” (Condry 2013, 1). All this underlies the tremendous success anime has had both inside and outside Japan. It is an enormous industry with billions of dollars in revenue (as seen in the charts on the next pages). Even if Yamaguchi Yasuo,⁸ managing director of The Association of Japanese

³ In Kalle Lasn, *Adbusters. Meme Wars: The Creative Destruction of Neoclassical Economics*. New York City: Seven Stories Press, 2012. Print. p.8

⁴ For example, *The Rose of Versailles*, *Sailor Moon*, and *Ōran High School Club*. Please refer to section 5.0. for a detailed explanation of *shōjo* in anime.

⁵ Some of the most popular being *Dragon Ball*, *Naruto* and *One Piece*.

⁶ Fan-created manga.

⁷ <<http://web.mit.edu/condry/www/>>.

⁸ I use the Japanese style for names, i.e., the patronymic comes first, then the forename.

Animations⁹ says that “the anime bubble burst several years ago; the marketplace is on a falling curve due to declining birth rates and the recession” (Asahi Shinbun,¹⁰ Anime News Network¹¹), the data shows otherwise. After analysing the data from the website <www.anidb.net>, a website claiming to list every single anime ever released since 1917—when the first anime came out—I have discovered that even if the number of anime released each year varies, the tendency is that more and more anime is produced each year, as seen in the following graph.¹²

⁹ Official website: <<http://www.aja.gr.jp/>>.

¹⁰ <<http://www.asahi.com/showbiz/manga/TKY200905040063.html>>.

¹¹ <<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2009-05-04/industry-group-head-says-anime-is-a-bubble-thatburst>>.

¹² Taken from <www.anidb.net>.

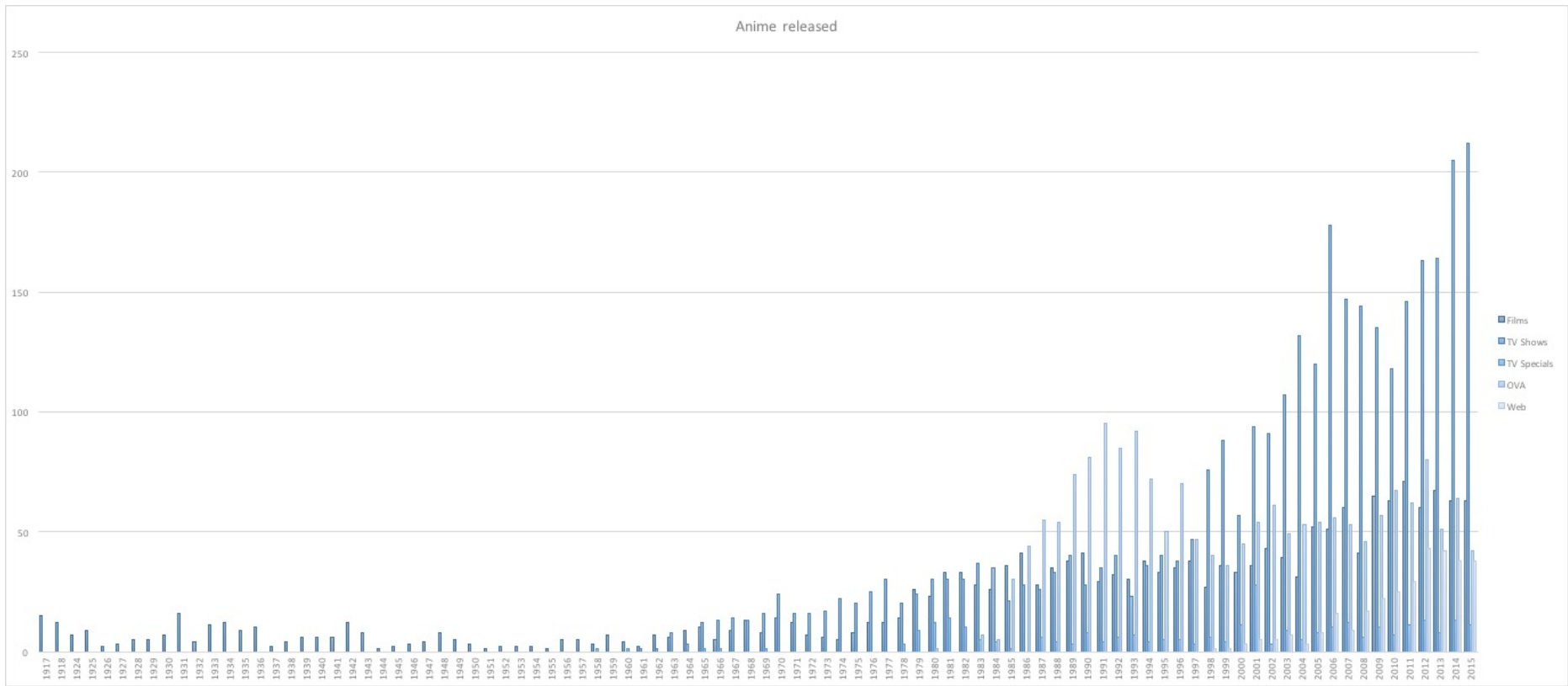


Fig.1.0. Every single anime ever released, according to data obtained from AniDB. Notice the sustained increase starting in the 1970s, and the vast growth in production starting in the 1980s. This graph is based on data inputed by fans, so it might not be 100% correct, although it does provide an accurate picture.

AniDB,¹³ the web's largest anime database, lists at the moment of writing a total of 9629 anime, and a total of 163037 episodes. Concerning sales, the following short list provides the amount of anime DVD sales in Japan between 2005 and 2008.

Table 1.0. Anime DVD sales in Japan (2005-2008).¹⁴ This information ends in 2008, but was the only one that could be found.

| Media | Year | Sales |
|--------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| DVD | 2005 | YEN 97.1 billion/ USD 982 million |
| DVD | 2006 | YEN 95 billion/ USD 904 million |
| DVD | 2007 | YEN 89.4 billion/ USD 904 million |
| DVD+Blu-Ray+HD-DVD | 2008 | YEN 77.9 billion/ USD 787 million |

The first chart reveals a massive increase in the production of shows from 2000 to 2006, which is also reflected in the DVD sales (YEN 97.1 billion in 2005). It also, however, shows a decrease in production in 2007 and 2008, exactly when the worldwide economic recession started. This caused sales to drop by YEN 19 billion in 2008 compared to 2005.

The amount of anime produced over the years has certainly increased massively, as can be seen in the following graphs. The first graph displays the number of anime films produced from 1958 to 2008, and the second the number of anime TV shows produced from 1963 to 2008. It is important to notice how the second graph demonstrates that fewer than 25

¹³ <<http://anidb.net/perl-bin/animedb.pl?show=main>>.

¹⁴ <<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2009-05-04/industry-group-head-says-anime-is-a-bubble-that-burst>>.

shows were produced in 1963, versus 288 shows in 2008. The increased popularity of anime over the years has meant an increase of 105% in shows in a period of 45 years.

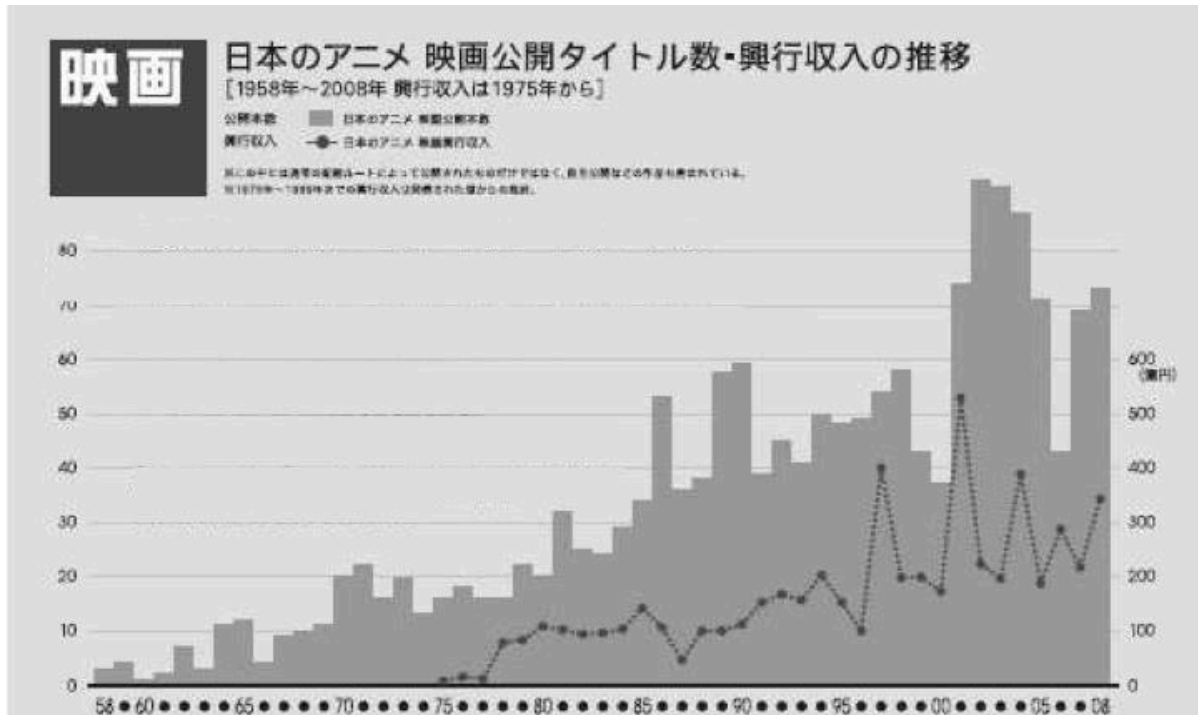


Fig.1.1. Production of anime films from 1958 to 2008. The bars indicate that, despite a decline after a huge increase at the beginning of the 2000s, anime production continues to grow. The graph illustrates the number of anime film titles produced from 1958 to 2008. (Translation by Kakumu Yuki.) Source: JETRO, Japan External Trade Organization.

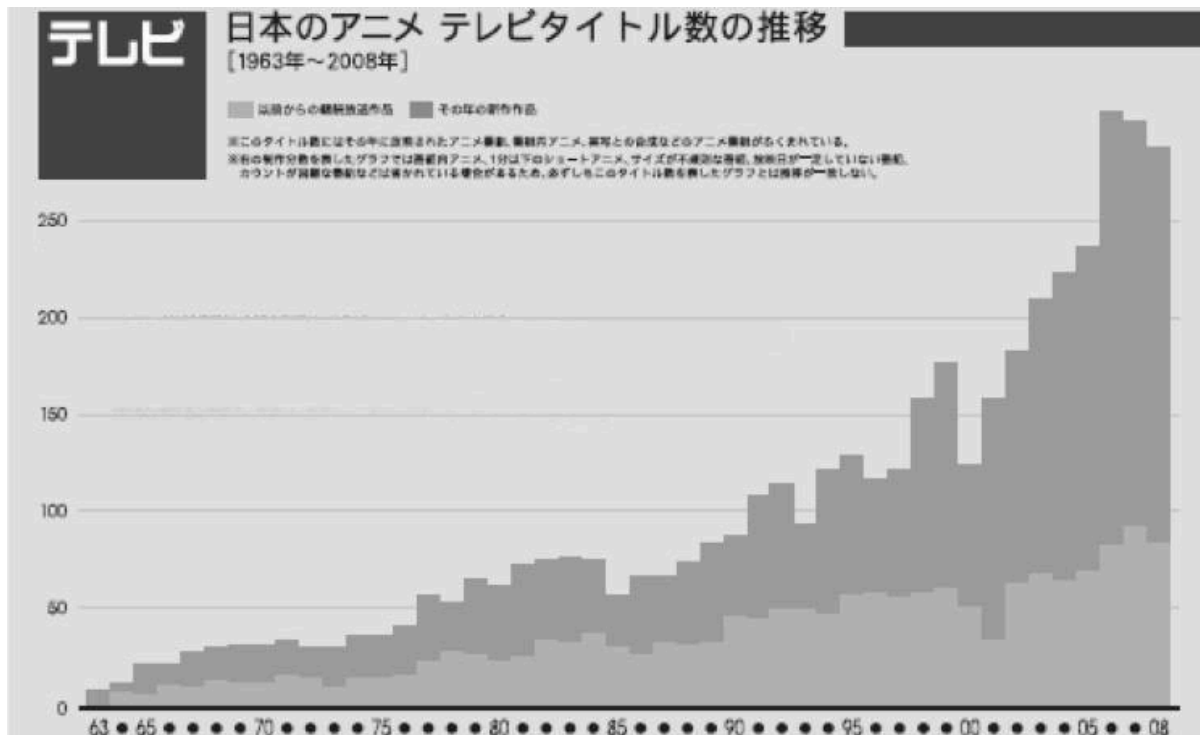


Fig.1.2. Production of anime television shows from 1963-2008. (Translation by Kakumu Yuki). Source: JETRO, Japan External Trade Organization.

Yet even if there was a 105% increase in the number of shows over a period of 45 years, the majority of current anime shows have fewer episodes than 10, 20 or 30 years ago. Currently most anime shows consist of around 11 or 12 episodes, usually due to budget constraints.¹⁵ Most of the income an anime production company receives is not through people actually viewing the anime, but from merchandise sales, e.g. toys, soundtracks, manga and games related to the show, since there is little product placement in anime shows. And, due to ongoing economic crises in Japan, companies have smaller budgets than they did in previous years. In order to cut costs, much of the animation for shows and films is actually done outside of Japan, in South Korea, to be precise (*Perfect Blue*, for example, actually lists

¹⁵ For example, *Psycho Pass* (22 episodes in 2012, 11 episodes in 2014); *Space Dandy* (two seasons of 11 episodes each, 2014)

Korean names in its credits), and occasionally in Vietnam.

Finally, concerning the translation of anime, several large anime translation houses (large meaning around 60 employees¹⁶) exist in the US, amongst them Crunchyroll, TokyoPop, Viz Media, and Funimation. Many translation houses suffered financial losses during the 2008 recession. For instance, Viz had to close its New York City office, firing 62 people in the process.¹⁷ At the time of writing, the two most popular companies, which stream anime online, are Crunchyroll and Funimation.

To summarise, anime continues to be a massive Japanese powerhouse. Its sales and the number of shows produced continue to increase, with production peaks every decade or so, e.g. in 1967, 1977, 1989, 1991, 2005 and 2015. There is no sign—nor reason—for this tendency to change, as anime’s popularity grows more and more all over the world. Anime is an international, global and successful pop form, and because of this, its translations and their disseminations must be studied more. The following section deals with what has been written about anime in translation studies.

1.0.2. The study of anime

The study of anime in academia has rapidly increased over the years, especially in the last two decades. The decade from 2000 to 2010 saw the release of major books in Japan and the United States regarding the study of anime, as well as the release of one journal dedicated

¹⁶ This is a high number for a translation company. For example, videogame translation companies in Japan, e.g. 8-4 Play (<<http://8-4.jp/about/en/>>) employ an average of 4 or 5 persons.<www.crunchyroll.com>, <www.tokyopop.com>, <<http://www.viz.com/>>, <<http://www.funimation.com/home>>.

¹⁷ <<http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/comics/article/43145-viz-media-lays-off-60.html>>.

exclusively to the study of anime, manga and Japanese pop culture in the United States.

The largest reference book on anime, *The Anime Encyclopedia* by Jonathan Clements and Helen McCarthy (now in its third edition) was released in 2001. 2005 saw the release of *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* by Susan Napier, now a classic book of anime studies, as well as *Animēshon-gaku nyūmon*¹⁸ by Tsugata Nobuyuki, where the author explores the meaning of animation and its relationship with arts, literature and businesses. *Cinema Anime*, edited by Steven Brown, was released in 2006, and features a variety of essays about anime politics, the posthuman body, and the limits of cinema. The journal *Mechademia* was also released in 2006. It is a journal concentrating on various issues (e.g. gender, production, fans, etc.) about the “worlds” of anime and manga. 2006 saw in Japan the release of *Nihon no poppupawā — sekai o kaeru kontentsu no jitsuzō*,¹⁹ by Nakamura Ichiya and Onouchi Megumi, with the book dealing with how Japan’s manga, anime and videogames “dominate” the world and help grow the Japanese economy.

The Anime Machine by Thomas Lamarre was released in 2009. It is one of the quintessential and most philosophical treatises concerning anime, in which Lamarre deals with epistemological issues of the art, interactions between anime and fans, as well as gender in anime. He addresses these subjects from various perspectives, dealing with issues such as the “lack of sex” in certain anime. *Dakara Ichiryū*²⁰ by Sugawara Akiko, was also released in 2009 and features a series of interviews with various personalities of the anime and pop industry in Japan, including an interview with Kon himself.

¹⁸ “Introduction to Animation”.

¹⁹ “Japan’s Pop-Power: The Real Image of a Content that Changes the World”.

²⁰ “Hence, Top Notch”.

Chan'neru wa itsumo anime,²¹ released in 2010 and written by Fujitsu Ryōta, is a critique of animation approached from various angles. *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story* was written by Condry in 2013, and deals with anime from the perspective of “collaborative creativity”, studying the manner in which fans interact in order to expand a show’s universe. His book is the most complete work regarding manga and anime fans’ collaborative work.

In translation studies, most of the research carried out concerning the translation of anime has focused on a narrow set of topics. Some authors have written on the translation of anime in a linguistic sense, as in the works of Minako O’Hagan (2003, 2009) and Ian Condry (2013). Others have put their efforts into exploring manipulation and censorship in anime, such as Ilaria Parini (“Censorship of Anime in Italian Distribution”, 2012) and Josephy-Hernández (“No Panties! Censoring Male and Female Characters in Three Popular Anime Shows Aired in Latin America and the US”, 2015). The study of anime—its translation, dissemination and gender portrayals, amongst other topics—can undergo considerable expansion in translation studies. This thesis seeks to fill that gap, even if only so slightly, by dealing with *Perfect Blue*, a film by Kon Satoshi. The next section, then, deals precisely with Kon Satoshi himself.

1.1. Kon Satoshi

Born 12th October 1963, Kon Satoshi was a manga artist, background animator and designer, layout artist, character designer, script and storyboard writer and designer, principal animator, and, chiefly, anime director. Kon was born on the island of Hokkaidō, Japan’s

²¹ “*The Channel Always Has Animation*”.

northernmost island, and the country's second biggest one after the main island Honshū. Kon first started as a manga artist, and “while attending Musashino Art University [in Kodaira, western Tokyo, Japan], made his debut with the short manga *Toriko* (1984), and was runner-up in Kodansha's 10th Annual Tetsuya Chiba Awards” (2015, n.p., *Dream Fossil* insert). Kon is credited by some, including *TIME Magazine*, as one of the people most responsible for bringing Japanese pop-culture to the United States. Satoshi Kon was listed as one of *TIME Magazine's* People of the Year in 2010.” (n.p., *ibid*).

1.1.1. Previous studies on Kon

There are few academic studies dealing specifically with Kon. Kon is little known compared to other anime directors, and “one major distinction between [Hayao] Miyazaki, [Satoshi] Kon, and [Mamoru] Oshii is that Miyazaki is definitively in the global and local mainstream, viewed ‘by all ages,’ whereas Kon and Oshii still enjoy a ‘subcultural prestige’ in their relative obscurity, especially in comparison to Miyazaki (e.g. they have not won an American Academy Award)” (Suan 2013, 23). This subcultural prestige is also reflected in academia and media coverage, with many articles referring to Miyazaki and his works (with good reason; Miyazaki's contribution to anime and culture cannot be emphasised enough). Nonetheless, this means that there is not much written on lesser known directors such as Oshii or Kon, on whom no studies in the area of translation studies yet exist.

There have been few published works on Kon. To be precise, there are “1 monograph, 5 essays in edited collections, and 17 journal articles”, according to Mikhail Koulikov, owner of the “Anime and Manga Studies” blog.²² Some of the most notable studies on Kon include

²² <<https://animemangastudies.wordpress.com/2014/12/14/anime-director-bibliographies-satoshi-kon/>>.

Susan Napier (2006), Andrew Osmond (2009), Melek Ortabasi (2009), Gabrielle Scott (2010), and Chris Perkins (2012). Napier (2006), who has written extensively on anime, concentrates on analysing *Perfect Blue* from the standpoint of the male gaze that targets performers in contemporary Japan. Napier analyses how Mima (*Perfect Blue*'s main character), as an *idol*, is affected by the gaze of men and how that takes her to the point of insanity. In his book *Satoshi Kon: The Illusionist* (2009), Osmond provides a summary of all of Kon's work, albeit sometimes superficially and informally in what is the largest work on Kon. He does, however, include interesting interviews with Kon and the people who worked with him. Ortabasi (2009) deals with the translatability of the images of the film *Millennium Actress*, focusing on how the "cinematic imagery becomes the primary medium of communication" (278), and the shortcomings that AVT faces in translating this (*ibid*). Gabrielle Scott's (2010) memoir deals with gender, violence, sexuality and the double in *Perfect Blue* and *Paprika*. I criticise Scott's conclusions in the "Gender and Kon" section (2.3.4.). Perkins (2012) concentrates on the ethics of Kon's films, and how violence affects its characters. In the next section I expound on the films directed by Kon Satoshi.

1.1.2. Kon's films

Kon directed four feature-length films, and one anime TV series. The films were: *Perfect Blue* (1997), in which Mima, an *idol*-turned-actress loses her mind after changing careers; *Millennium Actress* (2001), in which Kon takes the viewer on a tour of Japanese history and cinema through the eyes of a "running" actress; *Tōkyō Godfathers* (2003), in which three homeless people—a transvestite, a chubby man and a run-away teenager—find a baby in a garbage dumpster on Christmas Eve; *Paprika* (2006), in which a psychiatrist, Chiba

Atsuko (a woman) and her double, Paprika, must find the thief who stole a device that can enter people's dreams; and the anime TV series *Paranoia Agent* (2004), about a juvenile serial assailant.²³ I will now discuss *Perfect Blue*, since it is the focus of this thesis, and briefly deal with Kon's other work. Finally, I conclude this introduction by discussing the portrayal of gender and the gender issues that exist in *Perfect Blue*, and in Kon's other films.

²³ パフェクトブル, *Pāfekuto Burū*, 千年女優, *Sennen Joyū*, 東京ゴッドファーザーズ, *Tōkyō Goddofāzāzu*, パプリカ, *Papurika*, 妄想代理人, *Mōsō Dairinin*.

1.2. *Perfect Blue*Table 1.1. General information about the film.²⁴

| <i>Perfect Blue</i> (パーフェクトブルー, <i>Pāfekuto Burū</i>) (1997) | | |
|--|---|---|
| DIRECTOR: Kon Satoshi | | |
| SCREENPLAY: Kon Satoshi, Murai Sadayuki | | |
| ANIMATION Hamazu Hideki Shirai Hisao | MUSIC: Masahiro Ikumi UNIT DIRECTOR: Kou Matsuo | CHARACTER DESIGN: Kon Satoshi Eguchi Hisashi Hamazu Hideki |
| PRODUCTION: MadHouse, Oniro. BUDGET: YEN 3,000,00 RUNNING TIME: 82 minutes | RELEASE DATES: July 1997 (Fantasia Festival Montréal) 16 th February, 1998 (Berlin International Film Festival) 28 th February, 1998 (Japan) | |

The film's voice actresses and actors for the main characters are:

| Character | Japanese | English (US release) |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| MIMA KIRIGOE | Iwao Junko | Ruby Marlowe |
| RUMI | Matsumoto Rika | Wendee Lee |
| TADOKORO | Tsuji Shinpachi | Gil Starberry |
| ME-MANIA | Ōkura Masaaki | Bob Marx |

²⁴ Information taken from Clements et al. (2006, 485), and <<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=192>>.

Kon's first feature-length film is *Perfect Blue*. *Perfect Blue* is based on the book by Takeuchi Yoshikazu named *Pāfekuto Burū: Kanzen Hentai*.²⁵ Working with screenwriter Murai Sadayuki, Kon changed the film's script so that it would suit his own taste and could be released as an animated film (Osmond 2006, 29). *Perfect Blue* is a psychological thriller, 81 minutes long, about an *idol* (a female, Japanese pop star, more on this in section 2.3.3.) named Kirigoe Mima, who decides, by herself, to quit her *idol* band *Cham!* and become a TV actress, embracing her *ninjō* (personal feelings) against her *giri* (personal duties and obligations to society). As the movie progresses, we see Mima become doubtful and fearful, unsure whether her decision to become an actress was the right one. Throughout the film, she is stalked by someone who, on a blog, is writing disturbingly detailed descriptions of her life. Mima eventually becomes aware of the blog and grows fearful at the amount of detail it includes (e.g., referring to Mima, the fake blog says "I got off the train with my left foot"), and feels that someone is watching her all the time. After a short time Mima's guilt, along with the increased stalking she endures, makes her descend into madness, causing her to lose sight of what is real, and what is part of the show she is acting in.

Osmond writes that "in tampering with her star image, Mima finds fan fantasy invading her life, first in crank websites and letter bombs, then in the implosion of her own reality" (2009, 25). A rapid downward spiral of madness ensues after she performs—in her new job as an actress—a rape scene for the TV series *Double Bind*. Rumi, Mima's manager, is disillusioned with Mima's decision of becoming an actress, although she does not reveal this at first. After Mima performs a gang-rape scene for *Double Bind*, both Mima and Rumi suffer mental breakdowns. The film does not show how they meet, but Rumi is conspiring

²⁵ "*Perfect Blue: Complete Metamorphosis*".

secretly with Me-Mania, a security guard at the concerts of *Cham!* (Mima's original *idol* group). As it turns out, Me-Mania is Mima's stalker. Me-Mania has a strange sense of duty in that he feels he needs to protect his dear "Mima-rin",²⁶ even if it means killing Mima herself. Near the end of the movie, we see Me-Mania attempting to rape Mima, but Mima manages to barely escape, only to suffer an attack from Rumi herself, who has now completely lost her mind. Dressed in a red *idol* costume (Rumi was an *idol* in her younger days) Rumi attempts to kill Mima, but fails. Mima escapes and manages to survive the ordeal, and ultimately has a successful career as an actress. *Perfect Blue* is constantly asking the question "what is real?", toying with the viewer's perception of reality. Kon shows different realities to the viewer, as well as the various ways in which Mima becomes a depository of male desires, and is consumed by those male desires, to the point of self-destruction. These are two of the main themes in *Perfect Blue*: the questioning of reality itself, and a criticism of Japan's consumption and portrayal of women, specifically *idols*.

Perfect Blue received several accolades, amongst them the "Best Asian Film" category at Fantasia Film Festival (which takes place in Montréal, and was actually the first place to screen the movie) and "Best Film: Animation" in the same festival. It was also nominated for "Best Film" at Fantasporto in 1998, and for the "Golden Reel Award: Best Sound Editing - Animated Feature" by the Motion Picture Sound Editors, USA, in the year 2000.

The film has also exerted a strange influence in the United States. For instance, Pop-queen Madonna used clips of *Perfect Blue* during her "Drowned World Tour 2001", in which "the Geisha cycle is epilogued with hard techno beats and violent imagery taken from the

²⁶ *-rin* is an honorific used exclusively with *idols* and pop stars.

groundbreaking Japanese anime film” (Cinquemani 2001, np).²⁷ *Perfect Blue* had a more noticeable influence on Darren Aronofsky, a director born in the US and known for films such as *Requiem for a Dream* (2000) and *Black Swan* (2010). Aronofsky has been greatly inspired by Kon. To be precise, the scene in *Perfect Blue* where Mima is in her bathtub, and screams underwater, is replicated in the exact manner in *Requiem for a Dream*.²⁸ The scene first starts by showing Mima clutching her legs in her bath tub full of water, the shower curtain on the bottom side of the screen. The shot then closes in on Mima’s face, and we hear Mima scream. In Aronofsky’s *Requiem for a Dream*, the same scene is filmed in the same manner, but with actress Jennifer Connelly. *Black Swan* (2010), another of Aronofsky’s films, could be said to be his rendering or interpretation of *Perfect Blue*. In *Black Swan* Aronofsky shows a ballerina who, in her quest to be the best, loses her mind (a plot quite similar to *Perfect Blue*). It is quite interesting to see how Kon has had such a strong and underground influence in Hollywood.

²⁷ <<http://web.archive.org/web/20070320005000/http://www.slantmagazine.com/music/features/drownedworld.asp>>.

²⁸ Please refer to Appendix 1.0. for a scene comparison of the two films.

1.2.1. *Perfect Blue*'s characters

- The main characters:

- Kirigoe Mima



Fig.1.3. Kirigoe Mima. (Screenshot from the film's DVD release.)

Mima is the film's main character. Mima is of average height for a Japanese woman, white, with short, black hair and black eyes. She is an *idol* who decides to stop performing in her *idol* group *Cham!*, and instead starts acting for a TV series called *Double Bind*.

Mima is a naïve, young and energetic woman, who feels tremendous pressure to succeed as an actress after switching careers, even if she does this change happily. This change, however, places tremendous pressure on her, as she does not want to disappoint all the people who "have helped her get this far". Still, Mima embraces her *ninjō* (her personal feelings), and becomes an actress out of her own choosing. She is strong-willed, as she not only decides to change careers in a hostile environment, but also survives a series of

emotional, psychological and physical attacks by people who are discontent with her decision to stop being an *idol*. In *Mima*, Kon crafted an assertive female character who thinks by herself and takes her own decisions.

- “Phantom” Mima



Fig.1.4. Phantom Mima (as reflected on a train’s window). (Screenshot from the film’s DVD release.)

Phantom Mima is an illusion that Mima sees (and suffers from) when she, Mima, has done something she deeply regrets, or when she is suffering from self-doubt or loathing. As the movie advances, Phantom Mima appears more and more frequently to Mima, going from monologues to full dialogues with Mima herself. Phantom Mima spends a lot of time insulting Mima for having “tainted” her *idol* image. Phantom Mima appears dressed in Mima’s *idol* apparel, i.e. a white dress with pink borders and ribbons, as she is a

representation of Mima's regrets and doubts for leaving the *idol* scene.

- Hidaka Rumi



Fig.1.5. Hidaka Rumi. (Screenshot from the film's DVD release.)

Hidaka Rumi is also one of the film's main characters. She is a chubby, middle aged woman with white skin and short, black hair. Rumi is Mima's manager, from Mima's days in *Cham!* to when Mima becomes an actress. Rumi used to be an *idol* herself, so she knows the scene inside out. However, after Mima performs a rape scene for the *Double Bind* series, Rumi's personality changes, becoming extremely disillusioned with Mima. This causes Rumi to "snap" and go insane, unbeknownst to her colleagues, Mima, and Rumi herself.

- Me-Mania



Fig.1.6. Me-Mania. (Screenshot from the film's DVD release.)

We do not know much about Me-Mania. He is a tall man with a malformation in his jaw, uneven teeth, and long, shabby hair, but his most discernible physical characteristic is that he has a glass eye. Me-Mania is a security guard obsessed with Mima who feels it is his duty to protect her not only from fans, but from people “inside the *idol* scene” (e.g. writers, photographers), or even from herself. Me-Mania meets with Rumi in order to save Mima’s from being an actress, yet the relationship between Me-Mania and Rumi is not explored (the film does not really show them interacting, nor how they meet). Me-Mania’s unhealthy obsession with Mima has, in the end, dire consequences.

- Secondary characters:

- Tadokoro

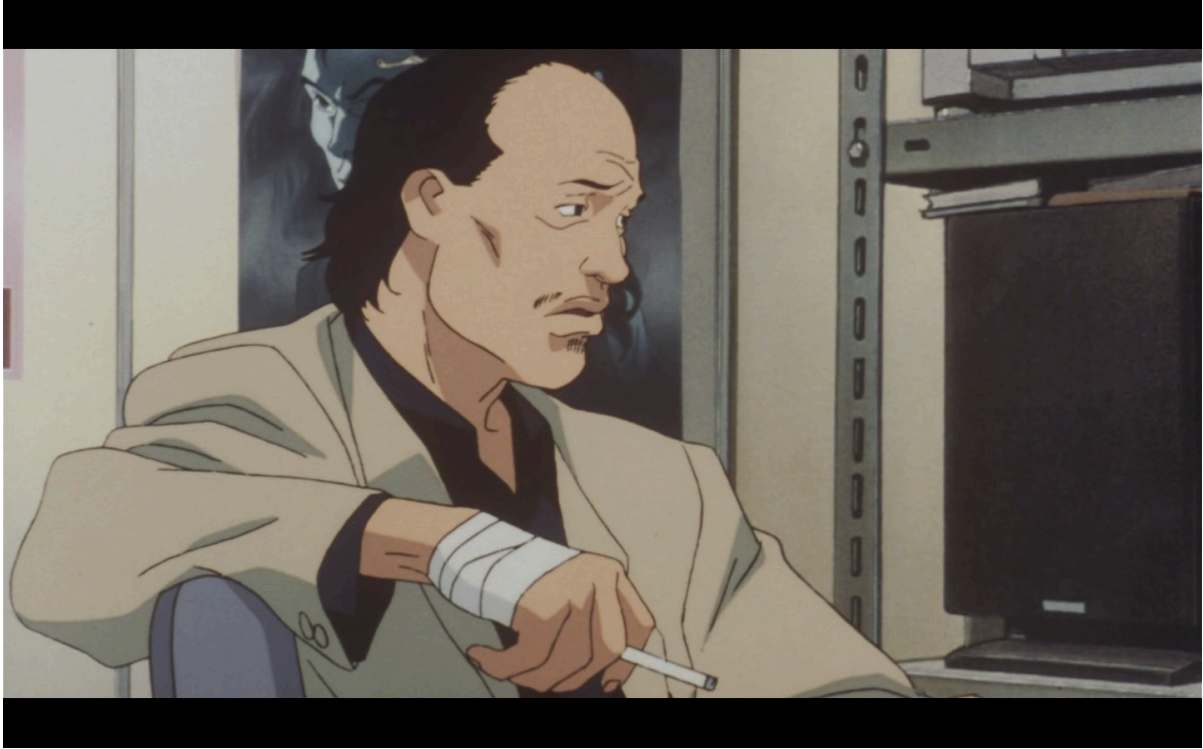


Fig.1.7. Tadokoro. (Screenshot from the film's DVD release.)

Tadokoro is, along with Rumi, one of Mima's managers. Unlike Rumi, he actually encourages and supports Mima's plan to become an actress, because as he says “*idols* don't sell so much anymore”. At one point during the filming of Mima's first scene on *Double Bind*, Tadokoro opens a letter (written for Mima), which turns out to be a bomb that explodes in his face. Tadokoro is actually the character who supports Mima the most during her most difficult times, but he pays the ultimate price for doing that.

- Rei and Yukiko



Fig.1.8. Rei (right) and Yukiko (left) performing as *Cham!* with Mima for the last time. (Screenshot from the film's DVD release.)

Rei and Yukiko are the other two members of *Cham!*, Mima's former *idol* troupe. After Mima leaves the band, they continue *Cham!* as a duo and achieve commercial success. In one scene, Yukiko mocks Mima for her decision to get naked for a photo shoot, showing her disdain. After the second half of the film Rei and Yukiko do not appear much, as the film concentrates on Mima's downward spiral into madness.

- The fans



Fig.1.9. The fans outside a venue after a *Cham!* show. (Screenshot from the film’s DVD release.)

It could be said that the *idol* fans (the “*wota*”), as a collective entity, are one of the film’s characters. The fans actively consume Mima’s image, attend her performances, and buy a plethora of items related to her and *Cham!*. They talk—in a serious manner—about how Mima’s acting career is not very successful, and that she should have stayed in *Cham!*. Me-Mania is the quintessential *wota*, obsessed and deranged about his *idols*. Section 2.3.3. provides a complete explanation on the topic of *idols* and the *wota*.

1.2.2. *Perfect Blue*'s reception outside Japan

Upon release, *Perfect Blue* received reviews. It is certainly not an easy film to watch, and its “dreams within dreams” sequences confuse many spectators. The film usually requires more than one viewing to be fully understood, which may explain the mixed reception. Osmond, in his book about Kon, argues that it is no “small wonder that *Perfect Blue* was seen by media pundits as another ‘typical’ Japanese animation. After all, it featured grisly splatter-killings and a set-piece rape, all fitting the bad-boy image that anime enjoyed” (2009, 38). In this case, Osmond explains that the media viewed *Perfect Blue* at the moment of its release as pretty much a standard anime that did not offer anything new. In another case, “*New York Post* reviewer Jonathan Foreman deemed *Perfect Blue* ‘primarily interesting as an anthropology, thanks to its combination of brutal, graphically depicted violence and a creepy, vaguely pedophile sexuality’” (Foreman 2000, in Osmond 2009, 38). This critic sees Mima as a little girl, ignoring her evolution as a character in the film from teenage pop *idol* to mature film actress.

In a film critique by Anita Gates for *The New York Times* published on 20th August, 1999, Gates says that “*Perfect Blue* eventually turns into a very interesting play on levels and perceptions of reality. Before that, it includes profanity, stabbing, strangling, hitting, lots of animated blood and some animated nudity. With smarter dialogue, it might have made a fascinating film” (n.p.).²⁹ Gates’ criticism of the dialogue is interesting. Is she criticising the Japanese dialogue, or the translation? Possibly the latter, since she was probably watching the film in English. Finally, in another critique, Bob Graham, writer of the *Chronicle Senior*, wrote that “‘*Perfect Blue*’ manages, through animation, to take the thriller, media fascination,

²⁹ <<http://www.nytimes.com/library/film/082099blue-film-review.html>>.

psychological insight and pop culture and stand them all on their heads”.³⁰ This critique is one of the few cases in which praise for the film actually exists.

1.2.3. Regarding *Perfect Blue*'s script

By the time he directed *Perfect Blue*, Kon was already an experienced animator who had directed episode 5 of the OVA (Original Video Animation) of the popular *JoJo no Kimyō na Bōken (Jojo's Bizarre Adventure)* as well as a short called *Memories* (1995) under the mentoring of DIR³¹ Otomo Katsuhiro. When working on the script for *Perfect Blue*, referring to interviews with Kon, Osmond explains that Kon took it “on his own terms. He read Takeuchi’s [the author of the novel] script (he never read the book) and found nothing to stimulate him. Kon stated that ‘If you want to stick with this screenplay, I don’t want to direct this film. But if you accept that I will make changes to it, I will do it. Madhouse [the film’s production company] were ok with that, so I [Kon] accepted”” (Osmond 2009, 26). Murai Sadayuki is normally the only person credited for writing the script;³² however, both Kon and Murai worked together on it, as Kon has stated in interviews.³³ For them, production of the script was hard work. Kon and Murai would normally take five to six hours per day to work on it, with Kon frequently going on tangents (Osmond 2009, 26). Both Kon and Murai enjoyed the process and also watched many films together during the creation of the script,

³⁰ <<http://www.sfgate.com/movies/article/Animated-Blue-Has-a-Surreal-Twist-Japanese-2903346.php>>.

³¹ DIR in this case means “Director”. This acronym will be used throughout this work.

³² As seen here <<http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=192>>, and in the various releases the film has had, as well as the storyboard collection (see appendix 1.0. for the staff credits in Japanese), and Osmond’s book.

³³ See appendix 2.0. for screenshots taken from the extras of the *Perfect Blue* DVD where Kon precisely states this. Kon also states this in an interview with Aoki Shinya, which appears in Osmond (2009, 26).

with “the movie scenes and shots becoming their mutual languages” (Osmond 2009, 26).³⁴

During the editing process of any film, many scenes from the storyboard were cut. In the case of *Perfect Blue*, Kon (in Osmond 2009, 26) explains that

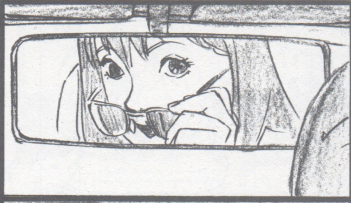

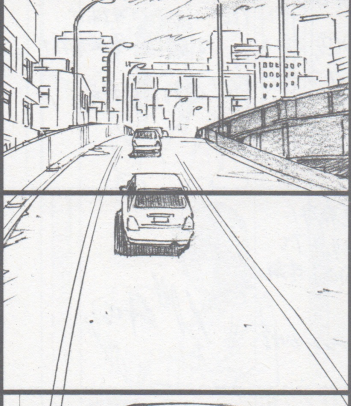
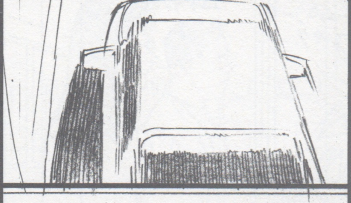
there were many [storyboard] cuts we had to make. In the end, I think we had to throw out about 100 scenes. Nearly all the missing footage was just there to show the passage of time. We cut several scenes of escalating suspense that were originally meant to emphasize Mima’s gradually growing fear. It’s very difficult to bring out the feeling of ‘gradually’ when you don’t have time to do it, so that led us to become bolder and cut most scenes in which stuff crept up on you.³⁵

If these scenes had been included, the film would have had a slower pace, perhaps contrasting with its frequent use of violent, rapid cuts from one scene to another, and perhaps improving on what can be perceived as a rushed final scene. For example, the following image of the storyboard shows a different final scene from the one that is actually shown in the film, which ends with Mima sitting in her car, staring at her reflection in the rear-view mirror, and exclaiming “No! I’m real!”³⁶ Yet, the final shot in the storyboard is different from the one used in the film, as it features a long, panoramic view of the car driving into the city (as seen in the following scan taken from the official storyboard book):

³⁴ “*Perfect Blue*’s press notes” (Osmond 2009,125).

³⁵ “*Perfect Blue*’s press notes ” (ibid).

³⁶ “*Watashi ha honmono dayo!*”

| S. O. | PICTURE | CAM | NOTE | DIALOGUE | M. | E. | SEC. |
|--------|---|-----|---|--------------|----|----|--------------|
| (1083) |  | | ルームミラーの 中 サングラス を外す時 (手拭い) (手拭い) (手拭い) ニコリ笑う | 「私日本物 T子」 | | | S. M. 5+0 |
| (1084) |  | | 高速道路へ 入る車の 車 PATER PAN UP | | | | |
| (R) |  | | 更にPAN UPして 画面いっぱいの 青空 | | | | |
| |  | | | | | | 10+0 |
| | END. | | | | | | |

No. 364

5+0

152

PERFECT BLUE / C PART

Fig.1.10. *Perfect Blue*'s final scene included only in the script and not used in the film (page 152 of the Storyboard Collection).

The translator of the Japanese screenplay into English is a Japanese woman named Takahashi Rika a “Translation and Localisation Professional”, who studied Chemical Engineering at Stanford University, according to her LinkedIn profile.³⁷ I attempted to contact her, but aside from the initial reply, no other questions were answered. She did mention, however, that she felt she “translates very differently now from then, as *Perfect Blue* was her first client”. Sadly, after this initial contact no conversation ensued.

1.3. Kon’s other films

After *Perfect Blue* Kon released *Millennium Actress* (2001, 87 mins), a movie about a film star named Fujiwara Chiyoko who tells her story of love. The film is loosely based on the real lives of actresses Hara Setsuko and Takamine Hideko.³⁸ In this movie, the film star’s experience as an actress merges with her real-life experiences until the viewer is unable to discern which scene belongs to a movie, and which one to the actress herself (this type of narration-within-narration way of telling a story also appears in *Perfect Blue* and *Paprika*). The film features many inside references to famous Japanese films such as *Gojira* (1954, DIR Honda Ishirō) and *Tanpopo* (1985, DIR Jūzō Itami). The film is Kon’s tribute to the films he loves, the art in general, and his reflections on Japanese history. Chiyoko’s long lost love, a painter from Hokkaidō, might even be Kon himself. *Millennium Actress* received several accolades, amongst them “Winner, *Festival Internacional de Cinema de Catalunya* [my italics] 2001, Orient Express Award” (*Dream Fossil* 2015, insert).

³⁷ <<https://www.linkedin.com/in/rika-takahashi-2a582b19/>>.

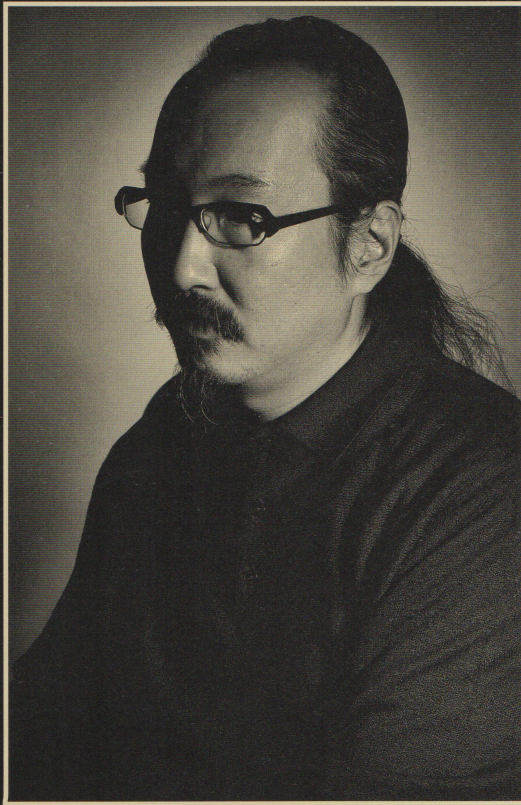
³⁸ (27th March 1924 – 28th December 2010). Known for *Floating Clouds* (*Ukigumo* (1955) and *When a Woman Ascends the Stairs* (*Onna ga kaidan o noboru toki* 1960), both by Naruse Mikio.

Two years later, Kon released *Tōkyō Godfathers* (2003, 92 mins), a humorous film in which three homeless people—a transvestite, an alcoholic man and a run-away teenage girl—find a baby in a garbage dump on Christmas Eve. The film is extremely critical of the homelessness problems that afflict Japanese society, as well as having, to this day, a unique and sensitive portrayal of a transvestite, not seen in any other anime. Unlike Kon’s previous two films, it is entirely based on real life, with no inter-mingling of realities, and has a strong comical, cynical undertone to it. Some of the accolades *Tōkyō Godfathers* received were “Winner, *Festival Internacional de Cinema de Catalunya* in 2003, Best Animated Feature Film” (*Dream Fossil* 2015, insert).

Kon’s *magnum opus* is *Paprika* (2006, 90 mins), a colourful film in which a psychiatrist named Chiba Atsuko invents the “DC Mini”, a device that lets its users record their dreams. It is a film that is staunchly critical of Japanese society, addressing issues such as youth’s self-prostitution for material gratification, political corruption, and primarily the inability to express one’s feelings. *Paprika* was named “Winner, 35th Montréal Festival of New Cinema Public’s Choice Award for *Paprika*, and Winner, 8th Newport Beach Film Festival, Best Feature Film Award for *Paprika* (ibid).

This would be the last film made by Kon Satoshi, as he died on 24th August, 2010, victim of an aggressive pancreatic cancer. Only a few close friends knew about his sickness. His death meant that he could not complete his final film, *Dreaming Machine*, of which only 600 out of 1500 stills are animated at the time of writing.³⁹ The copyright of *Dreaming Machine* is owned by the producer of *Perfect Blue*, Murayama Masao, now of studio MAPPA.

³⁹ <<http://www.deculture.es/2014/04/entrevista-masao-maruyama/>>.



今敏 (こん さとし)

1963年10月12日、北海道生まれ。
 武蔵野美術大学造形学部視覚伝達デザイン学科卒業。
 漫画家として単行本『海陽録』(1990)、
 『ワールド・アパートメントホラー』(1991、いずれも講談社刊)を出版。
 漫画からアニメーション業界に活動の中心を移し、
 1998年、長編映画『パーフェクトブルー』で監督デビュー。
 以後、監督オリジナルによる映画『千年女優』(2002)、
 『東京ゴッドファーザーズ』(2003)、
 筒井康隆・原作による『パプリカ』(2006)を発表。
 またTVアニメシリーズとして『妄想代理人』(2004)、
 短編アニメ『オハヨウ』(2007)を制作。

2010年8月24日逝去。享年46歳。

今敏オフィシャルウェブサイト <http://s-kon.net/>

Fig.1.11. Kon Satoshi's biography in the *Perfect Blue* special edition. The text reads:

Kon Satoshi shifted the centre of his activity from Manga to animation. In 1998, he made his directorial debut with *Perfect Blue*. After that, he made two original films titled *Millennium Actress* (2002) and *Tōkyō GodFathers* (2003). In 2006 he directed *Paprika* (the author of the original work was Yasutaka Tsutsui). In 2004 he made the TV animation *Paranoia Agent* (2004). His final work was the short *Ohayō* ("Good Morning", 2007).

Kon Satoshi died on 24th Aug 2010. He was 46.

(Translation by Tomita Ai.)

Chapter II:

Gender

2.0. Defining gender

2.0.1. Gender: A “Western” concept

This section provides a definition of “gender”, concentrating mainly on the work by the scholars Judith Butler and Joan Wallach Scott, as they are two of the most widely-cited and critical scholars in the area. After defining gender, the chapter moves on to a section about how gender has been understood in Japan, starting from the Edo Period (when most of the current gender values in Japan could be said to have originated). Finally, the chapter concludes with an account of what has been written on gender in translation studies and, specifically, in Audiovisual Translation.

Starting with a basic definition of gender, Judith Shapiro—anthropology professor at Barnard College—explains the difference between sex and gender, stating that sex relates to the biological differences between men and women, whilst gender refers to the social, cultural and psychological constructs that are *imposed* upon these biological differences (1981, 449). She argues that these constructs vary from one language to another, and one culture to another (*ibid*). The concept of gender means different things, for different people, at different times, in different socio-cultural, and even (socio)political situations. The concept of gender can even vary between, and within organisations,⁴⁰ peoples, cultures and specific

⁴⁰ For example, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction <<http://www.wcdrr.org/>> which took place in Sendai, Japan, in 2015, had its own “gender” pavilion, addressing the role that gender, specifically women, play when a natural disaster strikes, when having to rebuild a community. Interestingly, the pavilion was named “Gender” in English, but 女性 —*jōsei*, women—in Japanese, thereby excluding male (and many

time periods.

Joan Wallach Scott, a feminist who studies the history of gender, explains that gender “denotes ‘cultural’ and social constructions of what is supposed to be appropriate for men and women. The core of the definition rests on an integral connection between two propositions: gender is a constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between the sexes, and gender is a primary way of signifying relationships of power” (1996, 156, 167). For Scott, gender is a restrictive concept, a set of rules that people are supposed to, or must follow. If a person does not follow what people (or institutions) deem as the correct “gender norms/values”, then he/she is “breaking the rules”, or even the law. Thanks to gender differences, people can exert power over others; this is understood by most feminists as men exerting power over women, but should not be limited to those two genders. Scott (1996) concentrates on how the “power relationships” affect different genders, and specifically women.

Judith Butler is another major scholar in gender studies. Her work concentrates more on the institutional aspect of gender, or what she calls the “institutional constraints”, which are the constraints or limits that institutions impose on people (1992). This means, for example, that specific government “branches” might limit or target the rights of a sexual minority, all this done from the institution’s position of power. For example, in Japan, a country in which gay marriage has become legal in only a few wards (mostly in Tokyo, for example in Shibuya) the government imposes a specific set of social, gender and sexual values on people.⁴¹ As Butler says, “it is important to remember that the specific forms which

other types of genders). The concept and purpose of a whole organisation (in this specific case, a pavilion endorsed by the organisation) can change with the difference in translated terms.

⁴¹ <<http://www.cnn.com/2015/04/01/asia/japan-shibuya-same-sex-relationships-recognized/index.html>>.

freedom takes depend upon the social conditions and social institutions that govern human options at this time” (2004, 88). The Japanese government, and its institutions limit the freedoms of a specific group of Japanese people who do not conform to the standard gender binary or sexual norms imposed/expected by the Japanese government itself.⁴²

Butler also explains how society can construct a person’s gender. Expanding on the theories she developed in the 1990s, she asks how it happens that “that the ‘I’ who ought to be bearing its gender is undone by being a gender, that gender is always coming from a source that is elsewhere and directed toward something that is beyond me, constituted in a sociality I do not fully author?” (2004, 16). Butler sees gender constructed in a “sociality”, the way people associate in social groups, usually to cooperate, but in this case to impose a specific construct on other people who are usually apart from the “standard sociality”, i.e. apart from the standard groups of cooperation that impose the set of rules. A person’s gender, then, is not the person’s own “construction” or “decision”, but something constructed by a group of people, a “sociality”, that is not known to the actual bearer of the gender.

Butler explains that “no simple definition of gender will suffice, and that more important than coming up with a strict and applicable definition is the ability to track the travels of the term through public culture” (2004, 184). Rather than trying to determine what gender is, it may be also be useful to track the term in a historical sense, i.e. to track how the meaning of gender has changed over the years, in different contexts, and for different people(s) and (sub)cultures. This is something both Butler and Scott have done.

⁴² For example, the LDP (Liberal Democratic Party) of Japan, the party currently in power, opposes gay marriage. <<https://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2013/09/20/same-sex-marriage-in-japan-a-long-way-away/>>.

Today the term gender means many things, as Rebecca Reilly-Cooper—political philosopher at the University of Warwick, UK—explains.⁴³ Reilly-Cooper argues that first gender had the same meaning as sex, but that starting in the 1960s the term was appropriated by feminists in order to talk about the manner in which gender is an “externally imposed set of norms that prescribe and proscribe desirable behaviour to individuals in accordance with morally arbitrary characteristics” (2016). Reilly-Cooper then explains that today many types of “gender” exist, and that people think that “the next step on the path to liberation is the recognition of a new range of gender identities: so we now have people referring to themselves as ‘genderqueer’ or ‘non-binary’ or ‘pangender’ or ‘polygender’ or ‘agender’ or ‘demiboy’ or ‘demigirl’ or ‘neutrois’ or ‘aporagender’ or ‘lunagender’ or ‘quantumgender’” (2016). And yet, this plethora of gender identities seems to run the same risk of *categorising* gender, of placing people in boxes, Reilly-Cooper explains. The solution to an “oppressive system that puts people into pink and blue boxes is not to create more and more boxes that are any colour but blue or pink. The solution is to tear down the boxes altogether” (2016). For Reilly-Cooper the term gender has stopped making sense.

2.0.2. Language and gender

The complex relationships between language and gender have been studied from various perspectives. Robin Lakoff’s *Language and Women’s Place* (1975) was the groundbreaking book that launched— or joined—the areas of gender and language studies. For Lakoff it is imperative to study language in terms of gender because “the questions surrounding women and language bring together some of the most agonising, complex,

⁴³ <<https://aeon.co/essays/the-idea-that-gender-is-a-spectrum-is-a-new-gender-prison>>

diverse and ultimately insoluble issues facing our society” (Lakoff 1990, 199). According to Lakoff, language represents many of the problems that afflict society. It is a reflection of men’s and women’s status and roles in society, and how these interact, and how one—usually men—overpowers the other— usually women—through language. Janet Holmes and Miriam Meyerhoff, in the introduction to their book *The Handbook of Language and Gender*, write about the importance, and the role, that language has in allowing people to perform different aspects of their identity (2003, 11). For Holmes and Meyerhoff, gender emerges through language in interactions with others, but talk itself also “actively creates different styles and constructs different social contexts and social identities as it proceeds” (ibid). Thus, gender may vary not only according to specific socio(historical) situations, or even organisations (von Flotow and Scott 2016), but may also vary depending on the language used, and the interactions carried out with specific people, in that specific language (Holmes and Meyerhoff 2003, 11).

Language, then, can not only act as means of oppression towards certain genders or sexes, but also as a means of empowerment or a tool with which “the user” (e.g. the speaker or writer) can fight the power structures that are deploying the same language to repress the user itself. As Ann Weatherall explains in her work on language and discourse, “language issues are political issues. Language not only reflects women’s social position but can be used to challenge it” (Weatherall 2002, 2). Weatherall limits her assessment only to women, but language can be used by minorities in order to feel empowered and obtain equality. For example, Heiko Motschenbacher, author of a book on “Language, Gender and Sexual Identity”, explains that a “concern of Queer Linguistics is providing a critique of heteronormative language structures and making recommendations for people who would

like to avoid such practices” (2010, 40). The studying of language and gender is important because language not only acts as a reflection of the gender stereotypes and norms in place in society, but it also actively constructs and encourages them. Using language people can fight gender norms that discriminate against them, but that same language can be used to repress people. It is important to critically study language and gender in both synchronic and diachronic manner in order to understand how power relations in gender—through the use of language—function and have been used over time. This thesis seeks to do that, concentrating on the language that is used in the film.

2.0.3. Gender in Japan

This section deals closely with how gender has been understood in Japan from the Taishō Period (1912-1926) until the present days, using the work of Vera Mackie (a scholar of Japanese feminism) as the main basis. It also looks at the role of magazines during that period, as they had a tremendous impact in the divulgation of specific gender norms in Japan. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion of gender in Japan during the Shōwa Period (1926-1989) and the Heisei Period (1989-present), concentrating on how gender values shifted after World War II and during Japan’s economic crises.

Mackie explains that during the Meiji Era, “the public space was a gendered space, as women were excluded from the political sphere from the 1850s to the 1890s.” (2013, 66) Though excluded from direct participation in parliamentary politics, Mackie asserts they still found ways to be politically active by writing articles on topics and petitioning the government on issues which concerned them”.⁴⁴ In the Meiji Era Japan opened its doors to

⁴⁴ <<http://lha.uow.edu.au/hsi/contacts/UOW075939.html>>.

the world after having been isolated since the 17th century. Japanese women at that time could not hold any type of office.

A few decades later, at the beginning of the Taishō Period (1912-1926), women's magazines had become important in Japan. Two very important magazines, *Seitōsha* and *Seitō*—along with the images of women being circulated through advertising—caused a period of radical transformation for women in Japanese society. Magazines, as explained in the *shōjo* section (2.2.1.) were important for women's sexual education, for the portrayal of specific gender norms, and they provided a medium for women to talk about sexuality freely.

The magazine “*Seitōsha* (“The Bluestocking Society”) and the journal *Seitō* (“Bluestocking”, 1911-16) had a tremendous impact on the distribution of feminist Western ideas in Japan, as they included translated texts, which reflected the tremendously eclectic literary tastes of the time. This texts included women's modern poetry, haiku, personal fiction, essays, plays and translations of US and European literary texts. In fact, culture and gender scholar Iwata Nanatsu indicates that, “out of the 52 issues of *Seitō*, only two of them did *not* contain translations. Three of the translators involved in *Seitō* have now obtained a legendary status in the annals of Japanese women's history: Itō Noe (1895-1923), Nogami Yaeko (1885-1985) and Hiratsuka Raichō (1886-1971) [my italics]” (in Bardsley 2011, 213, 215). In *Seitō*, some of the foreign authors translated included Anton Chekhov, Anatole France, Henryk Sienkiewicz, Stanley V. Makower, Guy de Maupassant, Alfred de Musset, Dmitry Merezhkovsky, Edgar Allan Poe and George Bernard Shaw. And these were not “merely enthusiastic translations, but also highly skilled ones” (ibid 215). Ironically, all the authors previously mentioned are male. Presumably women authors were not yet considered worthy of interest or translation. And yet *Seitō* and *Seitōsha* became magazines that provided

a space where women could discuss taboo topics such as “sexuality, reproductive control and prostitution” (Mackie 2003, 6), which would normally not be discussed openly in society. Through the images the magazines published, also in their advertisements, they provided guidance or inspiration in regard to gender norms – advice on how to dress and act. By discussing these taboo topics in a safe, open, yet anonymous manner, women could express their feelings and concerns. This discussion gave rise to the “*atarashii onna* (‘the new women’) who would defy old norms and expectations” (Lowy 2007, in Takemaru 2010, 72).

During the Taishō Period, the image of the ‘good wife, the wise mother’ was only one of many types of women populating the press (in, for example, fashion magazines and newspapers), and in the popular imagination in interwar Japan. In early 20th century advertising, different images were portrayed. The model Japanese woman at the time was a modern one that embraced the ideas of the “Western” world in fashion and attitudes, whilst still remaining Japanese. For example, “three alternative female roles appeared in Shiseido advertising alongside the good wife and wise mother: the new woman, the schoolgirl, and the modern girl” (Dower et al., n.p.). This can be observed (in order) in the following images:



Fig.2.1. Suwa Kanenori. *Ginza Scene*, from pamphlet *Lady's Handbook*. 1927. Drawing. Shiseido Corporate Museum, Kakegawa. (Dower et al., n.p.)



Fig.2.2. The Japanese schoolgirl at the beginning of the 20th century. (Dower et al., n.p.)



Fig.2.3. *The Shiseido Graph* (Tokyo: Shiseidō), 36 (July 1936). Shiseidō Corporate Archive. (Dower et al., n.p.)

The Taishō Period (1912-1926) saw the rise of a new Japan after the chaotic Meiji Era. Michael Hoffman, a writer who lives in Hokkaidō, explains that the Taishō Period also saw the rise of:

mobo (modern boy) and *moga* (modern gal), *mobo* in bell-bottom trousers, floppy tie, colored shirt and round-rimmed *roido* spectacles, *moga* having shed her “shapeless, unbecoming kimono”. *Mobo*’s hair was long, *moga*’s short, sometimes boyishly short; sexuality was out in the open now and not to be hemmed in by simplistic old categories like “male” and “female.”

The “simplistic old gender categories” of the Meiji started changing at this time, and with this change came the rise of different concepts relating to “modernity” and “newness”, including terms such as “the modern boy” (*mobo*) and “the modern gal” (*moga*). In the Taishō Period “anxieties about modernity often focused on gender relations, with new forms of femininity being demonized in the process. Representations of transgressive women had a pedagogical function, teaching women about which models of femininity they should emulate and which they should distance themselves from” (Mackie 2013,75). During this time, the *moga* was a woman who was sexually active and free, flaunting her short hairstyle that was purposefully and openly erotic, as McClain states in his book, *A Modern History of Japan* (2002, 355).

McClain explains that unlike in the Meiji Period (1868-1915) where women were actively seeking to have a social and professional “equivalency” to that of men, the subsequent Taishō Period developed an image of women that was sexually open to many partners, going to the movies and listening to jazz (ibid). These models of femininity that women were encouraged to emulate were based on a combination of European and Japanese standards that “violated expectations of femininity, often in violent ways. The number of

such dangerous woman was actually small, but their transgressions had a huge symbolic weight” (Mackie 2013, 75). According to a study by Kon Wajirō (a professor at Waseda University) only 1% of the women at the time were actually what could be considered *moga*, (Sato 2003, 49). Sato, who authored the book *The New Japanese Woman* about Japanese women during the interwar period in Japan, explains that “what made the modern girl such a powerful symbol was not that she represented a small amount of “real woman”, but that she represented the possibilities of what all women could become” (ibid). The political climate of the Taishō Period, as well as its economic growth, allowed for a new freedom of expression through the printed medium and in real life, contrasting with the repression found at the beginning of the Meiji Era.

And yet women in Japan have still suffered repression well into the 20th century, and to this day. Women could not directly participate in politics, as “under the political system which operated in Imperial Japan (from 1890 to 1945), women were excluded from political participation simply because of their body specificity... The Japanese woman was discriminated simply because of sex, mostly due to an association of the female with reproduction, sex and specially impurity” (Mackie 2003, 233). However, the defeat of Imperial Japan in 1945, during the Shōwa Period (1926-1989), brought new rights for women. The new constitution of 1947, written jointly by Japan and the United States, declared that “simple bodily differences could no longer be seen as justification for excluding women from the rights of citizenship” (ibid).⁴⁵ Despite the disastrous defeat Japan suffered in World War II, the fact that the US wrote parts of Japan’s constitution meant that Japanese

⁴⁵ See “Interpreting the Tokyo War Crimes Tribunal: A Sociopolitical Analysis”, by Takeda Kayoko (2010).

women would finally obtain equal rights—at least on paper—to those of men, allowing them to vote and participate directly in politics.

In the 1960s, many of the social orders that exist today in Japan developed. Japan shifted from an agricultural into an industrial nation. It also created the prevalent business management structure, in which a seniority system was adopted that mainly benefited men. This meant the construction of yet another gender-role division, with men at paid work and women staying at home (Muramatsu 2002, 74).⁴⁶ This gender-based division of labour (in Japanese “*seiyakuwari buntan*”) is employed in a way that suggests a fundamental characteristic of Japanese society, with Japanese women typically remaining the primary caregivers for children and the elderly, as well as being responsible for the bulk of household duties, even when they work (usually part-time) outside the home (Dalton 2013, 27).

Despite some improvements concerning gender equality after the end of World War II, Kodama et al. conclude that, “after seeing some improvements in 1984, a decade later this upward trend had weakened” (1996, 63). Saitō believes that, because of the Japanese asset price bubble that started in 1986, women “did not want to succeed as much as before, reverting to more traditional roles, like staying in the house” (2001, 267).⁴⁷ When the bubble burst, women perhaps felt that their role was to revert to older roles in order to return to an established system that would let Japan rise again; yet Saitō angrily exclaims that “this is a

⁴⁶ It is important, of course, to emphasise that this patriarchal system existed before the Second World War, as seen in the movie “*生れてはみたけれど* (*Umarete wa mita keredo*, “*I Was Born, But...*”, DIR Ozu Yasujiro (1903-1963)“ (Phillips 25), in which a man, who would today be called a “salary man”, works under a boss who has no respect for him. Women appear in the movie, not as company employees, but as mothers and housewives.

⁴⁷ This is a massive economic crisis that affects every economic sector of Japan to this day, starting with the housing bubble explosion.

disappointment” (ibid).

From the 1980s until the mid-1990s, during the current Heisei Period, magazines such as *Agora* (Buckley 1991, 33) published academic studies concentrating on the difference between sex (性, *sei*, literally “sex”) and gender (ジェンダー, *jendā*, literally “gender”), popularising what was being discussed in an academic context (Mackie 2003, 234). It is interesting to see that these writings construe the concepts of gender (*jendā*) and sex (*sei*) in the same manner as they were constructed—at least initially—in a North American context.

In addition, the focus of discussions related to sex and gender was not on the bodies of women. Earlier, according to Mackie, it was “the feminine, reproductive and sexualised body which always seemed to be at the centre of discussion” (Mackie 2003, 234). In the 1980s and 1990s the discussion shifted to the male body, and the embodied practices which reinforced masculine dominance (for example, access to prostitutes). This, in turn, reinforced sexualised hierarchies (ibid 234). By making “the male” the centre of discussion women were able to see how men exerted power over them, but because of the economic crises the country has suffered since the 1990s, no real change has taken place in society.

Current Japanese feminism is different from feminism in the conventional “Western” sense, since it does not focus as much on individual autonomy (Buckley 1991, 62). This reflects a Japanese emphasis on collective rights, and their importance over individual rights. However, not much seems to have changed since then in Japanese society since that time, and my own personal observations have shown that progress in relation to gender equality seems to have declined or stagnated. It is still common to see many women who are 主婦 (*shufu*¹¹²),

“housewives”. Yet today more and more women are deciding not to enter into marriage because this is generally tantamount to career suicide.⁴⁸ Since Japan has a lamentable day-care system in comparison with other first-world countries, it is very hard for women to return to work after they have had a child.⁴⁹

Since the 2000s there has been a renewed interest in women’s gendered roles in Japan, mostly analysed by foreign Western scholars that work in Japanese Studies and/or live in Japan. For example, Patrick W. Galbraith and Jason Karlin have published a volume about *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture* (2012). This explores one of the most recent trends in the study of gender (and, specifically, women) in Japan, which is that of the *idol* phenomenon. As explained in section 2.1.3, an idol is more than a pop star, it is a “word used in Japan to refer to highly produced and promoted singers, models, and media personalities. Idols can be male or female, and tend to be young, or present themselves as such; they appeal to various demographics, and often broad cross sections of society” (Galbraith and Karlin 2012, 2). The study of *idols* also relates to the study of *kawaii* (cute) Japanese culture in general, as well as one of the vastly under-explored areas of study of Japanese pop culture which is the study of gender in anime (see section 2.0.) and how this relates to—or reflects—Japanese society in general.

⁴⁸ <<http://theweek.com/article/index/254923/everything-you-need-to-know-about-japans-population-crisis>>.

⁴⁹ See <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/04/17/national/day-care-crisis-stuck-vicious-cycle/>> and <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2016/03/07/national/angry-blog-post-sparks-movement-for-improved-day-care/>>, and <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/27/world/asia/japans-mothers-in-hokatsu-hunt-for-day-care.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0>.

Today, Japan still has one of the lowest indexes in gender-equality of any developed country (with the exception of South Korea), as seen in the World Economic Forum's 2014 "Global Gender Gap Report", which shows Iceland in first place, Canada in 19th, the US in 20th, Costa Rica 48th and Japan in the 104th position in the overall ranking.⁵⁰ Gender equality in Japanese society still lags in comparison to other countries, and no change seems to be in the horizon. The linguistic issues related to gender in the Japanese language are explained in section 2.4.

2.1. Gender in translation studies

This section deals with what has been written about gender in translation studies, and how the two areas (gender and TS) have intersected, concentrating on four scholars who have written major works on the topic: Lori Chamberlain (1988), Gayatri Spivak (1993), Sherry Simon (1996) and Luise von Flotow (1997, 2011, 2016).

Sherry Simon, a professor at Concordia University in Montréal and one of the pioneers of gender in translation studies along with Luise von Flotow stated—twenty years ago—that translation studies is, in many ways, similar to feminism because both have a distrust of traditional hierarchies and gendered roles (Simon 1996). Both areas are essential tools for a critical understanding of how difference is represented in language (ibid 8). Simon argues that important questions in both fields are “how are social, sexual and historical differences [are] expressed in language how these differences can be transferred across languages? What kinds of fidelities are expected of women and translators—in relation to the more powerful terms of their respective hierarchies” (1996, 8). These questions asked by

⁵⁰ See <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GGGR14/GGGR_CompleteReport_2014.pdf>.

Simon in the 1990s are still relevant today, and actually seem more important in a time when women, and men actively rebel against the patriarchal status quo in areas that were traditionally dominated by men, such as literature and film, both inside and outside Japan.

Simon's notion of "hierarchies" relates to the idea that for many centuries translation has been seen as a somehow feminine activity. This is further explored by Lori Chamberlain (1988), another prominent scholar of gender in translation studies. Chamberlain starts her article "Gender and the Metaphorics of Translation" by explaining how Clara Schumann spent most of her life transcribing her husband Robert Schumann's compositions. Even if Clara was a composer in her own right, she spent more time transcribing what her husband wrote, as well as taking care of their eight children (1988, 254). Chamberlain goes on to discuss how translation has long been considered as a cliché about women, unfaithful, if they are beautiful (1988, 255). She explains that in regard to the French phrase designating translation, *les belles infidèles*, fidelity is defined by an implicit contract between translation (as woman) and original (as husband, father, or author). However, the infamous "double standard" operates here as it might have in traditional marriages: the "unfaithful" wife/translation is publicly tried for crimes the husband/original is by law incapable of committing" (1988, 255). In this case, the "original" is the first text created, the "literature" that undergoes less scrutiny—like the husband—than the translation of that text, i.e. the wife who is unfaithful. Chamberlain ends her article by arguing that, in a way, it does not matter if it is a woman or a man writing or translating the original text, but that "what must be subverted is the process by which translation complies with gender constructs" (1988, 267).

Luise von Flotow, professor at the University of Ottawa, explains that we live "in an era powerfully influenced by feminist thought, and that has had an acute effect on translation

practice” (von Flotow 1997, 14). Von Flotow writes about how gender and feminism can influence the actual practice of translation, and how through the act of translation itself, people can bring feminist thought to the fore. She also explains that “because the women's movement has defined language as a powerful political instrument, many women working in an ‘era of feminism’ also face issues of intervention and censorship in translation” (1997, 14). A woman’s language can be censored so that her ideas are not disseminated. Just like women are repressed psychologically, physically and socially, a woman’s—as well as a man’s—message, in a book or film, for example, might be changed in a translation, modified to suit the needs of a specific state, in a specific place, at a specific time.⁵¹ This has happened frequently with the translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s *Le Deuxième Sexe* into English, which had many “quotation cuts, philosophical omissions, and mistranslations, among others” (Bogic 2010, 2). A translation can be censored/adapted by any translator, as in cases of “with-it translationese” discussed by Spivak (1992), in which powerful women in academia translate a text but—perhaps unknowingly—censor it so that it is adequate for the publishing houses.

Translation, however, can also serve to spread feminist ideas around the world. For example, the 1970s translation of Simone de Beauvoir’s *Le Deuxième Sexe* into Norwegian was also released in an abridged version in order to reach a broader audience, which “was positive for women’s rights movement in Norway” (Solberg, np). Similarly, the translation of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, the classic American feminist self-help book on women’s reproductive health, led to many different versions being released in many different languages, but also extended the influence of American feminism around the

⁵¹ As explained in the next section.

world” (Gordon, np).⁵² In the case of the 2002 translation of *The Vagina Monologues*⁵³ into Turkish (in Turkey), “women translators act as agents of resistance towards the dominant poetics in the Turkish culture repertoire” (Akçasoy-Bircan, np⁵⁴). Translation has an important role to play in the spread of ideas, and this include feminist ones, as described above. This is specifically addressed by Santaemilia and von Flotow (2011) in their volume titled *Woman and Translation: Geographies, Voices and Identities*, in which they present historical descriptions and issues related to feminist and women’s translation in Catalonia, China, Galicia, Germany, Russia, Turkey and Québec (2011, 12). These translators, Santaemilia explains, “try, by various means, to make visible the mechanisms of construction of gender discrimination, of prejudice against men or women, and of day-to-day sexism” (ibid 11).

A translator, then, can effect a change in society. Von Flotow describes three practices in which a translation has been rendered as a feminist “act” in Canada: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and hijacking (Simon 1996, 13). In supplementing the translator intervenes, or makes a compensation, so that the text is rendered more feminist. Prefacing and footnoting draw attention to the translation process itself, something that is much practised in translation (not just feminist translation). Hijacking refers to the appropriation of a text whose intentions are not necessarily feminist by the feminist translator, who then develops it for their own political purposes. The classic example is the replacement of the generic masculine in French by a feminized version of the language as in the case of Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood’s work (Simon 1996, 12-14). By carrying out hijacking, the translator

⁵² <<https://www.thenation.com/article/translating-our-bodies-ourselves/>>.

⁵³ An episodic play written by Eve Ensler that premiered in 1996.

⁵⁴ <http://www.ujk.edu.pl/ifo/translation-conference/?page_id=135>.

can make a text more feminist, or at least try to exalt women more. Yet, a contrasting initiative can also be found. Furukawa (2016, np), explains that in Japanese a “feminizing translation connotes women’s underprivileged position in society”. It is carried out through the use of Japan’s gender-marked language (as shown in section 3.1.). By making women more “feminine” in a translation—which is done by assigning them a clichéd “feminine” language, women remain in their “underprivileged position in society” (ibid), even through a foreign text. Furukawa argues, then, that a de-feminising approach should be carried out in order to challenge the gendered-linguistic and ideological norms found in Japanese literature and society (ibid).

To conclude, von Flotow and Joan Wallach-Scott argue that in gender studies “women are the center of interest, and indeed, the term “gender” often evokes specifically women’s rights. But questions of gender are not restricted to women. All humans are sexed, and therefore gendered, and all manifestations of gender can be studied. Translation studies offer the means and methods to do so across boundaries set by cultures and languages” (2016, 371). As both authors state, much has been written about gender and translation studies, mostly from women’s perspectives. If the study of and translation of gender is to effectuate a change in society, people of various genders (even ‘agender’ people) races and social classes need to be involved in the discussions. Translation studies is an area of study which “offer[s] the means and methods to do so [promote such discussion] across boundaries set by cultures and languages” (ibid), thus benefiting all genders and potentially society at large.

2.1.1. Gender in audiovisual translation

Gender in AVT is, thus far, a topic of little research in translation studies. It has been addressed by a few scholars, specifically Cheung and Gilson (1993); Joyce (1997); Baumgarten (2005); De Marco (2006, 2006, 2009, 2012); Bianchi (2008), Chiaro (2007); Lewis (2010); Feral (2011a, 2011b); Sánchez-Espinosa and Costa-Villaverde (2011); Ranzato (2012), Hiramoto (2014), Josephy-Hernández (2016), and von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2017). This section concentrates on the work by Bianchi (2008), Feral (2011), Ranzato (2012), in a summarised form taken from the article by von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2017).

Despite gender studies entering academia in the 1970s, and cinema existing for more than a hundred years, little work has focused on questions of gender in AV translation. Only since the beginning of the 2000s have researchers tapped into this area, realising the importance of translation and localisation of audiovisual material in promoting specific ideologies, especially patriarchal, heteronormative perspectives.

Von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández (2017) explain that three major ways to approaching gender in AVT seem to exist. The first (and most developed) approach examines AVT materials for the accuracy in which they reflect the feminist content and nuance of the original text, e.g. in Chiaro (2007), Bianchi (2008), Feral (2011a), and DeMarco (2006, 2012). The second approach addresses differences between subtitled and dubbed versions of a same product, e.g. in Feral (2011b) and Hiramoto (2013). The third approach examines other sexual orientations and linguistic representations in/through translation, e.g. in the works of Lewis (2010), Asimakoulas (2012), and Ranzato (2012).

In the first approach, Diana Bianchi (2008), professor at the Department of Political Sciences at *Università degli Studi di Perugia*, provides a great example. She argues that in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Buffy (the main character, a vampire hunter) herself is “dubbed down” to the stereotypical notions around Italian female sexuality, either sexually passive and proper, or consumed by a wild passion. Her deliberate exploitation of men, her sexual stamina and energy are “tamed and normalized” (Bianchi 2008, 191ff). Bianchi suggests that “these alterations made have been made in order to satisfy the demands of the network and the producers in relation to the most explicit sexual allusions and swearwords. Even though the characters do not strictly speak ‘dirty’ in these scenes, the way in which Buffy is described and defines herself is rather unpalatable and in contrast with traditional representations of correct sexual behaviour for young heroines” (ibid 192). When Buffy is modified to submit to specific Italian sexual and gender norms, she moves out-of-character within her own character: she speaks in a passive, submissive manner, but her actions, which remain are expressed through untranslated images, are quite different.

The second approach is exemplified by Anne-Lise Feral (2011b), now an independent researcher who studied at the University of Edinburgh. In her research on the dubbing and subtitling of *Sex and the City* (*SatC*) into French (from France), Feral (2011, 399) discovers that:

the differences between the translation choices in the subtitles and the dubbing suggest divergent values concerning women in the public sphere. While the cultured élite has access to a university educated, professionally ambitious and/or powerful feminine voice [in the French subtitles], this voice seems to have been naturalized into another voice, which appears to put less emphasis on female education, skills, ambition and success [in the French dubbed version].

Feral argues that subtitling in France differs from dubbing because it is usually aimed at a cultured elite. She asserts that, whilst the subtitled version of *SatC* presents a powerful,

active and professionally-ambitious woman, just like in the US source text and its feminist perspectives, the dubbed French version has a different voice, that appears to place less emphasis on female education, skills, ambition and success (ibid 399). In her analyses, she finds that “feminist scrutiny of the French dubbing of *SatC* shows a marked tendency to depreciate female achievements. The four heroines’ power, competence and ambition in the public sphere seem to have been ‘naturalized’ into a more acceptable ‘traditional’ understanding of [French] femininity” (ibid 400). In the French dubs, then, the women of *SatC* are “naturalised” as much as possible to conform to traditional and current standards of French (feminism and) femininity.

The question to ask is, “why are the majority of French viewers expected to prefer humbler female voices to those of the high-flying career women who flaunt their academic and professional excellence and ambition” (Feral 2011b, 399). Much like the Italian case of Buffy’s dub into the Italian market (Bianchi 2008), not only may the people prefer a more subdued female character, but the decision-makers (e.g. dubbing directors, company bosses) insist on heteronormative ways of thinking. Feral urges researchers in AVT to pursue more work that analyses the portrayal of women in dubbed versions. She claims that “as woman-oriented material such as *SatC* is produced and translated for mass consumption and reaches a broad female audience worldwide, further research on the ethical and political aspects of the ways in which feminine voices are naturalized in audiovisual translation seems to be more urgent than ever” (2011b, 405). She also argues that more research is needed in how translation and AVT act as a marginalising force against women and feminism. Even if the issues of cultural adaptation, censorship and self-censorship have been explored by Nornes

(2007) and Díaz-Cintas (2012), said issues have rarely been analysed from a feminist point of view (2011a, 392).

Finally, the third approach (Lewis 2010, Asimakoulas 2012, Ranzato 2012) deals with “other” or “less common” linguistic representations of gender. For example, both Lewis (2010) and Ranzato (2012) find that, whereas English has an abundance of colourful vocabulary related to “queer”, other languages like Italian or Spanish either have a much more reduced vocabulary, or do not have equivalent terms. These are then replaced with more conventional language (von Flotow and Josephy-Hernández 2017, np). Furthermore, Lewis and Ranzato explain that many gay or queer references are lost, not only because of censorship, but because the translators might actually not understand or simply “miss” the original queer or “ambiguous” references, and do not translate them.

Contrary to this, Karina Chagnon, doctoral student in semiology at Université de Montréal, explains that the translations into Québec French of the TV shows *Queer as Folk* and *The L Word* have had tendencies to systematically increase the register of the show’s gay phrases and vocabulary (2016, np).⁵⁵ By making the language “gayer”, the show attempts to further emphasise the homosexual aspects of the script, which results in stereotypes of gays and lesbians created for the sole purpose of permeating them and obtaining a larger viewership, at least in Québec.

A translator can decide to follow a government’s regulations (labelled as “morally right” by the government itself), and in doing so, further foment, for instance, a heteronormative way of thinking that diminishes women’s importance and intelligence. With

⁵⁵ “Des tendances générales d’évacuation et de censure de la sexualité en plus d’un relèvement systématique du registre de langue”.

AVT, however, the responsibility is much higher because the medium in which the translation is disseminated is enormous and far-reaching, experienced by immeasurably broad audiences, making it very difficult to measure how many people are actually viewing a specific show or film. However, all these people are watching it, and the importance of how the show is translated attains a new dimension.

2.2. Gender and hegemony in anime

“Las películas son muy autoritarias, la mayoría dicen qué pensar;
el cinema es casi un dictador”. - Miguel Gomes, Portuguese director⁵⁶

This section provides a survey of the main research carried out in the area of gender in anime. Section 2.0. provides a definition and study of the term “gender”, understood here in an essential sense: sex relates to the biological differences between men and women, whilst gender refers to the social, cultural and psychological constructs that are *imposed* upon these biological differences (Shapiro 1981, 449). First I contextualise each of the anime genres discussed, and then I explain how each genre participates in a hegemonic and heteronormative narrative that may well encourage the current gender inequalities in Japan. Throughout this section I will also deal with the media in Japan.

In general, studies of gender in anime have focused on *shōjo* and its variants (including *mahō shōjo* and *yaoi*): Saitō (1998), Allison (2006), Kotani (2006), Prough (2011),

⁵⁶ “Films are very authoritarian, most tell you what to think. Cinema is like a dictator”. Stated in a Q&A at the Costa Rican International Film Festival, December 2015.

Shamoon (2012), Pagliassotti et al. (2013) and Saito (2010, 2014). However, this section also deals with gender portrayals in *shōnen* anime (anime for boys) about adventures and fighting), and includes a critical commentary of how the genre suffers from a “male gaze” (Mulvey 1975) or what is called the “fan service” in anime. Additionally, in this section I address how these specific genres have had a massive role in disseminating a particular set of gender portrayals. These genres serve as an introduction to section 2.3., which is a critical analysis of gender in the works of Kon Satoshi, and specifically in *Perfect Blue*. But first, I will provide a short explanation of the media in Japan and the “media-mix”.

2.2.1. Media in Japan

In this section I will address the issues related to media and specifically media and anime in Japan and discuss how that relates to the dissemination of specific gender portrayals. I analyse major anime genres and their formulaic approach to narration in order to contrast this with the work of Kon.

Todd Gitlin, a prominent sociologist and media scholar, explained in 1979 that “many of the formal conventions of American television entertainment are supports of a larger hegemonic structure” (251). Gitlin’s media theories can certainly be applied to anime, and I will attempt to show in the following paragraphs how anime works to “rehearse social fixity: they express and cement the obduracy of a social world impervious to substantial change” (ibid 254). Gitlin explains that this can be done through (1) a specific format and formula, with the same type of (stock) characters and (stock) plots that are shown at specific time for maximum exposure (ibid 254); (2) a particular genre that people will love and consume, (ibid 257), in the case of anime, genres such as *shōjo* and *shōnen*; (3) a specific

character type that, even if it seems that the market allows for certain changes in the type of characters that are displayed, “the core of the hegemonic values remain virtually impervious” (ibid 260); (4) a specific slant, i.e. a particular position on a public issue (ibid 261); and (5) a specific solution that is normally solved by the end of the episode amongst the show’s characters, but leaves the rest of society impervious to change (ibid 262). As I will show in the next paragraphs, most anime follow specific patterns that support a specific, hegemonic way of thinking.

Japan has a media format called the “media-mix”. The “media-mix” is a term that refers to the different products that can be created around an anime release in Japan; it is “a popular, widely used term for the cross-media serialization and circulation of entertainment franchises” (Steinberg 2012, viii). Similar to the media-mix is the term “convergence”, originally coined by Henry Jenkins, a media scholar, which initially referred to the possibility of all media merging into one, but later becoming a term to signify the proliferation of content across multiple media forms” (in Steinberg 2012, vii). However, Jenkins himself, as well as media scholars Anne Allison, Mizuko Ito and Thomas Lamarre have argued that Japan’s model of media convergence—the media-mix—is different from the *convergence* Jenkins talks about, the latter being centred in the United States (ibid). For Jenkins, “the media-mix strategy disperses content across broadcast media, portable technologies such as game boys [currently any handheld console] or cell phones, collectibles, and location-based entertainment centres from amusement parks to game arcades” (2004, 110). This means that when an anime is released, the animation is not the only release available to the public; the public can find a series of manga, toys, chocolates, card games, magazines, soundtracks, etc. about the anime. Hence, an anime’s release can exist in several format and media.

In his book *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*, Marc Steinberg explains that the term began to have its current meaning in the 1980s, and that anime was “a major turning point and inspiration for the development of what would later be called the media mix” (2012, viii). Steinberg studies the two main types of media-mix: *Tetsuwan Atomu* (the anime series known as “Astro Boy” in America) and the one of Kadokawa, a media conglomerate in Japan, but originally a book-publishing house. Steinberg, in a historical recount of the media-mix since *Tetsuwan Atomu* explains that the latter started the media-mix by creating a consistent image of a character in different media and material forms “anchored around the particular movement-stillness aesthetic of anime and its associate forms” (ibid 201), and that Kadokawa, under the lead of Kadokawa Haruki, adopted a media-mix that was later expanded to other media such as “novels, films, and later television” (ibid).

Japan has over the years developed a unique distribution model in order to disseminate anime products in different media with the media-mix at its core. These anime, however, can be divided into different genres, each which follow a specific formula and have specific gender portrayals which are disseminated through Japan’s media-mix. I explain in detail four of these main genres below; this serves as a point of comparison and contrast with *Perfect Blue*.

2.2.2. *Shōjo*

Gender in anime has been studied mostly from the *shōjo*—romantic relationships written from a female perspective, for and by women—perspective. The term *shōjo* has various definitions: The “most ‘efficient’ translation to English would be that of ‘girl’,

although the Japanese meaning carries a much more specific connotation. It is in reference to teenage girls, particularly to girls in the liminal adolescent space between childhood and adulthood” (Shamoon 2012, 2). Shamoon, assistant professor in Japanese studies at the University of Singapore, explains that normative concepts of girlhood were created and disseminated through print media, especially during and after the Meiji Period (1868-1912), and before the Second World War, when a new space (the *shōjo* one) appeared for girls—of urban, educated middle and upper classes—to develop socially and intellectually (Shamoon 2012, 2). During this time the media—mostly magazines—featured “models of speech, dress, behaviour and style” (Imada 2007, 9-10, in Shamoon *ibid*) for readers to follow.

In this thesis, *shōjo* is categorised as a sub-genre of anime aimed at girls and women, dealing mostly with topics of love and relationships. It usually features a teenaged girl who falls in love with one or more boys—love triangles being a typical conundrum in *shōjo*. It is also occasionally mixed with more supernatural aspects like Japanese gods and goddesses (e.g. *Fushigi Yugi*,⁵⁷ *Fruits Basket*⁵⁸). Many *shōjo* are set in a school or “kingdom” of some sort, with very European (usually Rococo or Greco-Roman) architecture, and characters in European dresses. The characters might speak Japanese, but in most cases this is their only Japanese trait. As Saito Kumiko, a scholar of Japanese culture and feminist theories states, “they are Japanese only so far as their putative origin is Japan” (2014, 143).

The artistic style of *shōjo* characters, in both anime and manga, has female characters with soft lines and slim, flat-chested bodies, and a coiffure with delineated contours. Male figures are drawn in a very similar style, with soft, delicate lines, and again a hairstyle with

⁵⁷ 1996, DIR Kamegaki Hajime.

⁵⁸ 2001, DIR Daichi Akitarou.

delineated contours, although their eyes are more extended to the sides (without making them look Japanese) than women's, who normally have round and bigger eyes. The effect of using this drawing style is to make the male characters actually look more feminine or “gender ambiguous” and more appealing to a female audience. This gender-bending is a recurrent theme in much *shōjo*, where women will frequently dress as men (e.g. in *The Rose of Versailles*, *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, *Ōran Highschool Host Club*), and men will sometimes dress as women as well, although not quite as frequently (e.g. *Fruits Basket*, *Fushigi Yugi*).

Many of the *shōjo* archetypes came into existence thanks to one of the most popular *shōjo* of all time, *The Rose of Versailles* (sometimes known as *Lady Oscar* or *La Rose de Versailles*; 1979, DIRS. Nagahama Tadao, Dezaki Osamu);⁵⁹ the show created a template, a format and formula (Gitlin 1979, 254) for pretty much every single *shōjo* to follow afterwards. The series is about Oscar François de Jarjayes, the daughter of François Augustin Regnier de Jarjayes (a real-life French general), who is raised as a man to be her/his father's successor, as the latter did not have a son. The plot is based on the life of Marie Antoinette, and includes her and Axel von Fersen the Younger—her lover in real life—as protagonists. The other major character is André Grandier, Oscar's childhood friend who is madly in love with Oscar. They grow up together in the upper class and royalty, but later André embraces the ideals of the French people, as does Oscar. Of course, this being a *shōjo*, it has a tragic ending: Oscar and André, after many years, finally share a night of passion; their sole night together. André, however, is tragically killed the next day by a stray bullet during a riot at the peak of the French Revolution. Oscar, having lost the love of her life, dies the next day, just as the people of France are storming La Bastille.

⁵⁹ ベルサイユのばら “*Berusaiyu no Bara*”.



Fig.2.4. Girls' Comics in the 1970s.

Shōjo first functioned as a medium to provide Japanese girls with particular gender portrayals. And yet, despite the gender-bending, *shōjo* in the end actually continues to reflect heteronormative portrayals of men and women in most cases. The prince may be dressed as a princess, or vice-versa, but they are still pursuing a relationship with the opposite sex. These recurrent motifs in *shōjo* exist to this day, but there is another sub-genre of *shōjo*, which has become more important due to its wider dissemination. It is called *mahō shōjo*, the “magical girl,” and this is the focus of the following section.

2.2.3. *Mahō shōjo*

The magical girl genre, known as *mahō shōjo* or *majokko*, is a genre in which a teenage or pre-teenage girl acquires a magical power, usually from the “stars” because it is her “destiny” to obtain this power in order to fight the forces of evil. Saito Kumiko (2014, 144) explains that the magical girl has exerted a tremendous influence not only in Japan, but all over the world. She explains that “the conventions of the magical girl genre, especially the elaborate description of metamorphosis that enables an ordinary girl to turn into a supergirl, have been widely imitated across various genres and media categories”.⁶⁰ This can be seen even in animation in the US, like in Cartoon Network’s *Powerpuff Girls*. For Saitō Minako, (2001) the genre has not really changed over the years. She explains that a practical way to identify the *mahō shōjo* genre is “primarily by means of its business structure. Unlike the United States and some European countries, where advertising directed at children is seen as highly problematic, it is best to consider Japanese magical girl anime as twenty-five-minute advertisements for toy merchandise” (Saito 2014, 144). In the case of the *mahō shōjo*, the whole show is in itself an advertisement.

David Simon director of *The Wire* states that “in television the most pregnant moment has for decades been the commercial break” (in Álvarez 2010, 1). Simon criticises the fact that most television shows revolve around the advertisements that are shown during the commercial breaks. However, in the case of most cartoons in the US, as well as in much anime (especially genres like *mecha*, giant robots, and *mahō shōjo*) the entire episode could

⁶⁰ However, Saito (2014, 145) explains that “despite its firm visibility and popularity in Japanese society, the [study of the] magical girl has been mostly neglected”.

be considered a commercial break in itself. In the case of *mahō shōjo* the marketing of products never really ends, as the show is created to sell a product. The same time, the advertisements that interrupt the show explicitly sell the show's products.

The act of selling merchandise happens on two levels: Within the show itself, and outside the show through advertisements. In *mahō shōjo* not only do the companies make a profit by selling the “magical items” worn and used by the shows' heroines (e.g. tiaras, wands), but also with the products advertised during the commercial break, which can also stem from the show. If a TV show is successful (like *Sailor Moon* or *Pokemon*), then the company will bring in huge profits.

The format or structure of the plot in *mahō shōjo* is formulaic, and normally consists of the following tropes: (1) A girl is fighting an enemy; (2) who, as it turns out, was nothing but a resentful entity who did not want to hurt anyone; (3) and is unwillingly working for his/her evil master; (4) who is actually the ultimate enemy—usually a primordial evil—that was corrupting the previous entity, and must now be defeated. This is not only symptomatic of *mahō shōjo*, but of much anime in general, especially in *shōnen*, where “boys” fight against an enemy through several “stages”. In these shows there is a recurrent “level up” in power that keeps the show fresh. This “level up” or “upgrade” in power is usually obtained by the heroes and heroines who fight against evil, whilst the enemies normally “transform” into a grimmer version than before. This, of course, becomes a huge selling point, as the consumer is enticed to purchase all of the show's figures, postcards, trading cards that have all the possible transformations of the main characters in order to have a complete collection. As explained in section 2.2.1., this is part of Japan's media-mix, and besides the previous items, other merchandise can include posters, books, manga, soundtracks—both singles and

albums—and videogames.

The issues surrounding *mahō shōjo* are not merely of the commercial kind, but also related to gender. Even if the *mahō shōjo* girls are magically “powered”, it does not really mean that they are “empowered” in the feminist sense of the word. They have simply obtained the power from the moon or start to fight evil and, hopefully, be noticed by the male protagonist of the show in the process. There is one scholar in particular who has been extremely critical of the role of *mahō shōjo* in the formation of values and gender roles in boys and girls in Japan, and that is the literary critic Saitō Minako. In her book “*Anime. Tokusatsu. Denki no Hiroinzu*” (“A Heroine for the World: Heroine’s Image in Tokusatsu and Denki Anime”) released in 2001, Saitō describes the vast differences that exist in the portrayal of gender in anime shows aimed at adolescents. Saitō starts by describing the “anime land”, and how this land is divided into two stories: “The story for boys, and the story for girls” (2001, 13-15). Saitō takes some of the most classic anime from the 80s and 90s anime (e.g. the aforementioned *Sailor Moon*) as examples to demonstrate how shows are tailored for binary gender purposes.

Saitō explains that “in the land of anime, girls no longer wait for ‘Prince Charming’ to arrive. After the famous Sailor Moon was released, heroines do fight and battle, but are, just like in Cinderella, transformed by magical powers” (2001, 15). For example, what happens in *Sailor Moon* is that the main character, a naïve and clumsy girl named Usagi Tsukino transforms into an adult, or at least an older version of herself, to fight evil. The world of *Sailor Moon* is one of magic and dreams, with the *sailor senshi*—sailor warriors—using the power of the moon, and objects such as wands and tiaras, to transform into a stronger self. The moon is in this case a feminine entity, whilst the wands and tiaras are feminine objects. It

is an ethereal, magical world full of bright colours. This is the opposite of the boy's world, which is full of science and technology (Saitō 2001, 27, 31) and solid colours. *Mahō shōjo* implicitly encourages the specific gender roles people must have in Japanese society: A woman must be soft, a dreamer, whilst a man must be tough, technologically and scientifically inclined. Women are illogical and passionate, whilst men are rational and cold. This is also very evident in *shōnen* shows like *Digimon*, which I talk about later on in this chapter.

In *Sailor Moon*, the land of girls is one made of “magic, with the Universe made of the Moon and the Stars, whilst it is also a land that believes in the process of rebirth and astral journeys. A boy's goal is to defend planet Earth, and a girl's goal is to pick up humans' dreams and the energy of love; it is a dream country. It is guns for the boy's world, and tears for the girls' one” (Saitō 2001 27, 31). A girl's world is one full of abstract icons and intangible objects (e.g. the energy of love), whilst the world of men is grounded on earth and full of tangible objects (e.g. guns). Through *mahō shōjo* shows, girls learn to be “soft” and to “dream of the stars”.

To conclude, *mahō shōjo* is a formulaic show full of stereotypes and follows even more normative gender roles than in *shōjo*, as it displays girls as a world “full of magic”, in very specific mystical roles, with very clear-cut plots of good vs. evil. It has a stock of character and plot types that can be easily reproduced with little change, and still have tremendous success.

In the next section I deal with another major genre of anime, which is *shōnen*, and its stereotypical, masculine portrayals of gender.

2.2.5. The “Male Gaze” in *shōnen* anime

Shōnen is anime aimed at young boys, the male counterpart to the female *shōjo*. In it, characters fight against evil, and it is anime with a high adventure content. Ironically, even if most anime seems to be *shōnen*, and many of the archetypes in the genre create templates for other anime genres (e.g. *mecha*, of giant robots in space), this genre of anime has not been studied much, unlike its counterpart *shōjo*. This section includes a critical investigation of the gender roles in *shōnen* anime, its stereotyping of women, its “male gazing” and the way the forces of hegemony operate around this.

The male gaze is a concept introduced in 1975 by feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey in her ground-breaking article “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”. Mulvey argues that women are shown on screen in a patriarchal manner, suffering from a “male gaze”, which is the eroticisation of women not only for the characters on the screen, but also for the audience that is looking at what is displayed on screen (1975, 838). An example of the male gaze is the manner in which, for example, the camera is positioned to emphasise a woman’s physicality. I believe it is important to analyse this in anime for the purposes of understanding the gendering of the genre. The male gaze within the anime industry is actually called “fan service”, which means “a treat” given by the show’s producers to its fans. This treat normally involves a female character acting or being drawn in a suggestive manner. Many shows (such as the ones mentioned in this section) today, however, seem to completely revolve around this fan service/male gaze aspect, with the little plot is focused on how female characters show their bodies.

Mulvey’s theories have been criticised for been “too binary” (this article was published in 1975, after all) as her organisation of the gaze (male-female) “reinforced binary

logics around sexuality, with the cultural prescription toward heterosexuality especially unexamined and racial, ethnic, and class difference equally erased from the screen” (Callahan 2010, 10). In other words, Mulvey’s theories ignore aspects such as black people’s “resisting spectatorship” (Diawara, in Callahan 2010, 10). However, this “binary logic” works perfectly for the analysis of *shōnen* anime, since anime is quite binary and stereotypical regarding specific gender roles. Furthermore, anime rarely features characters from other races—most characters are white—which makes this binary even more obvious.

Mulvey’s theories also fail to address aspects related to the voice, something Kaja Silverman worked on a decade later (as explained in the next paragraph). Mulvey’s analysis might seem basic at times, but her work helped kick-start feminist and gender analyses in cinema, and “many of its insights still apply to film production today” (Chaudhuri 2006, 2). Margaret Gallagher (2003, 19) sums it up by saying that “early analyses found the media to be deeply implicated in the patterns of discrimination operating against women in society”. Due to the anime’s binary nature, then, Mulvey’s theories of “male gazing” can be easily applied to study gender portrayals in anime.

The male gaze is a strong feature of anime. When a female character comes on screen and acts in a sexual manner, or is displayed in a sexual way by emphasising her physical attributes, this is not only done for the male characters within the scene, but also for the male and female audience. This is the “male gaze” that Mulvey identifies, placing female characters “in their traditional exhibitionist role [where] women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 1975, 837). This, in turn, causes anyone who is in contact with the medium to be exposed to patriarchal gender roles—through

genres like *mahō shōjo*—and the sexualisation of women—through genres like *shōnen*. The relationship between media and the creation and maintenance of gender roles has been discussed and analysed since the 1970s, predominantly from the Anglo-American-feminist perspectives by authors such as Mulvey and Kaja Silverman. Silverman explains that “it is by now axiomatic that the female subject is the object rather than the subject of the gaze in mainstream narrative cinema [...] and it is equally axiomatic that she is denied any active role in discourse” (1984, 309). As Mulvey argues, the female is a mere object to gaze at, pleasure oneself with, to possess. The following images are but a small sample of anime that feature women in a male-gazing role:



Fig.2.5. *Highschool of the Dead* (2010, DIR. Araki Tetsuro).



Fig.2.6. The main female characters of *Asobi ni iku yo!* (2010, DIR. Ueda Yōichi).



Fig.2.7. *Samurai Girls* (201, DIR. KOBUN).

Referring to the particular physical attributes female characters have in anime, Chris Kincaid, who writes online about various anime topics, explains one of the reasons why these anime exist: “Anime is not only produced for a Japanese audience, but also a western one. Studios need to make money, hence they make jokes, combined with breast hijinks. Both the US and Japan share the same fetish, so it’s common ground for marketing stories” (np). This is not the only reason, as I will explain in this chapter, but it is one of them. Since the early 2000s, the “anime explosion” (as shown in section 1.0.1.) in the United States has created a massive increase in the production and consumption of anime. This in turn pressured anime companies, and everyone in them, from the director to the artists, to deliver more products to be consumed by more people. These efforts are specifically aimed at the US market, the largest consumer of anime outside of Japan. It soon became evident that some of the most successful products—both in Japan and the US—make use of one, a few, or all of the following characteristics, as seen in the images before: 1) A female character with a slim figure; 2) a female character that blushes frequently and is “shy”, specially when talking to a man (who is usually her onii-san);⁶¹ 3) a female character who says “*gomennasai*” (“I’m sorry!”) many times, i.e. she apologises frequently for her clumsiness or mistakes; 4) a female character that uses a skirt or some short clothing like a sailor suit; and 5) a female character whose cleavage and underwear can be seen frequently. *Shōnen* anime is the one anime genre where Japan’s hegemonic masculinity and chauvinistic portrayal of women—graphically, and in the way they act and talk—can be most easily observed.

Shōnen anime, just like *shōjo* anime, also follows a specific “level up formula”, where the characters are constantly battling enemies that level up. However, much *shōnen* anime

⁶¹ “Big brother”.

also frequently consists of the following formula: A boy bumps into a girl, and the girl falls; the boy blushes and his nose bleeds; the girl blushes and looks down. It turns out, then, that these two characters end up being classmates at the same high school. Despite some initial apprehension towards the boy, the girl faces a problem—usually a bully or harasser—and so the boy must come and save her. Following this moment, the girl realises that the boy is not bad after all, and decides to give him a chance to redeem himself. This recurrent formula has proven to be tremendously successful, to the point that most anime shows fit within this formula, allowing for certain variations, but still within “the core of the hegemonic values” (Gitlin 1979, 260). In other words, certain aspects of the plot and character design may change, but they still reflect and remain within Japan’s hegemonic masculinity.

As can be imagined, whilst these shows may be female-centred, they can hardly be called “feminist”. They feature many female characters who are normally “at the service” of a man (e.g. fighting or cooking for one), or simply engaged in some situation in which the physical attributes of the female character are emphasised. Hence, these genres are quite the opposite of a “feminist” show. What they display is considered the standard of much anime, at least for those who do not watch anime: Sexualised women who do not think, have exaggerated physical attributes and big, starry eyes.⁶² This also causes the “female spectators themselves to be ‘desirous of the female’”, as Saito Ayako—professor in the Department of Art Studies at Meiji Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan—explains of Gertrude Koch’s

⁶² See *Highschool of the Dead*, *Asobi ni Iku Yo!*, *The World God Only Knows*, *Heaven’s Lost Property*, *Sekirei*, *Date A Live*, *Senran Kagura*, *Samurai Girls*, *High School DxD*, *Queen’s Blade*, *Love Hina*, *Haganai*, *No Game No Life*, and a seemingly never-ending etc.

theories:⁶³

Koch says that female spectators do not simply identify with the male gaze but are themselves desirous of the female image. Images of women are not simply superimposed on the mother, the object of a pre-oedipal desire; nor do female spectators merely objectify women through a masculine gaze. Indeed, images of women embodied by stars (Dietrich or Garbo, for example) have been meant for male and female consumption alike. (2010, 155)

It seems that today, in the majority of anime, the plot and the animation quality are secondary to the constant bombardment of sexualised characters displayed for the pleasure of both men and women. What used to be a gratuitous, sporadic and even *comic device* called “fan service” (as seen in for example the original *Evangelion* anime⁶⁴) has become the main purpose of most anime. The medium is now tailored to pubertal grownups that only care about seeing a subjugated woman, subjected to the will of the man/male character. The result is, then, that not only men will have heteronormative values reinforced on them, which they can promote and act out in real life, in society, but also that women might want to adapt to specific standards of beauty, even if these are of animated characters.

There is also a second manner in which *shōnen* displays female characters in an archetypal, heteronormative manner, that is, in specific motherly roles. I contrast those shows with with the few that do *not* show female characters in those roles. I conclude that the latter is a small minority in a sea of heteronormative anime. Two shows are analysed: *Digimon Adventure 02* (2000-2001, DIR. Kakudō Hiroyuki), and *Dragon Ball* (1986-1988, DIR Toriyama Akira), both popular *shōnen* shows.

⁶³ Gertrude Koch is a theatre and film studies professor at Freie Universität Berlin <<http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/we07/institut/mitarbeiter/koch/index.html>>.

⁶⁴ *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995-1996, DIR. Anno Hideaki).

Digimon is an anime about a group of chosen children that are transported into the digital world, where they befriend “digital monsters” (hence the title *Digimon*), and must fight against evil digital beings that are trying to take over both the digital and real world. The following images are the closing ones from season 2 of the series, showing what each character accomplished after they ended their adventures in the digital world.



Fig.2.8. An image of a grown-up Yagami Taichi. He is the hero of the first *Digimon* season, and grows up to be an ambassador between the Digital and Real worlds. Pictured here with his *Digimon* partner Agumon.

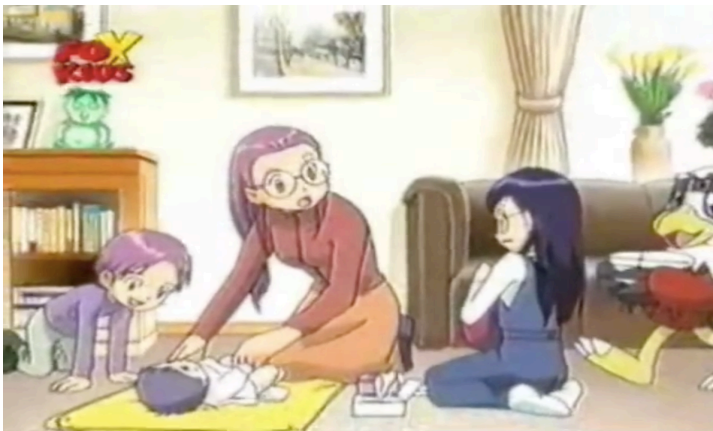


Fig.2.9. Inoue Miyako, one of the main heroines of the second *Digimon* season, here grown up, taking care of her children. Her husband Ichijouji Ken, a fellow comrade in her digital adventures who ends up becoming a policeman, is nowhere to be seen in this picture.

These images at the end of the series can be said to destroy much of the “equality” that was present during the show. To be precise, in this second picture we see Miyako, a computer programmer and scientist heroine who fought against the forces of evil. However, Miyako contradicts the portrayal of equality: She also has the “Digi-eggs” of *Love* and *Sincerity*, which is stereotypical for female characters in anime, but she is also a girl with scientific and technical knowledge, contrary to Saitō (2001, 31) states are the majority of characters. Perhaps a woman, can, after all, be a loving person and a scientist at the same time?⁶⁵ The ending, however, completely undermines the gender equality that was on display throughout the season, as it simply portrays Miyako in the final seconds of the show as a mother taking care of her children.

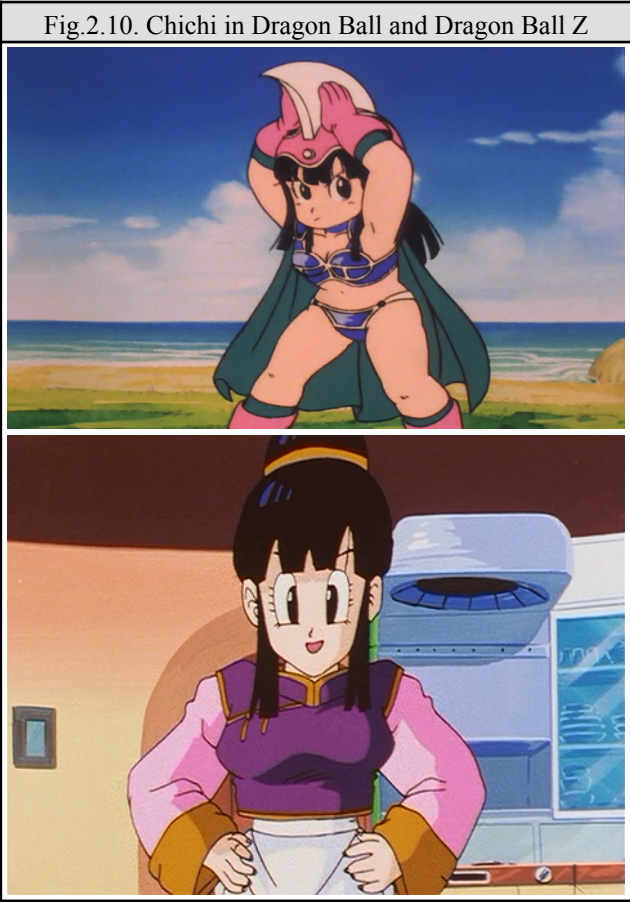
When placed in the context of the show, and the social context of Japan, it is discouraging to see this finale. It would have been more egalitarian from a gender standpoint to show Miyako as a scientist or engineer, working at home and balancing her career as a scientist at the same time, instead of portraying her in perhaps the most stereotypical manner possible in anime for women: a traditional, motherly role. Miyako was a scientist when she was young, but when she became an adult, she had to conform to normal and social gender roles in Japan, i.e. become a wife and mother. This is, as I explain in the “gender in Japan” section, the expected role for women in life. *Digimon*’s heteronormative ending is even more salient when we consider that Taichi, the main male character, becomes an ambassador to the United Nations. *Digimon* makes the argument that a man can become an ambassador, but a woman with scientific and technical expertise is nonetheless destined to be a mother and

⁶⁵ Literally eggs that hatch the Digimon that are to accompany the heroes in their adventures. She is also the first human character in the Digimon series to be paired with a Digimon of the opposite sex.

wife.

In the case of *Dragon Ball* (1986) directed by Toriyama Akira (a man), the main character Goku and his friends battle against a series of enemies that get more powerful as the series advances. Goku, a boy with inhuman strength, fights to defeat evil and save the world. *Dragon Ball*'s few female characters are surprisingly strong, even engaging in physical battles and fighting at times. Even Goku's wife Chichi is initially an enemy who fights against him. However, in *Dragon Ball Z*—*Dragon Ball*'s sequel released in 1989—Goku is an adult, and has married Chichi. Yet Chichi, who was a strong, independent character who fought in battles in *Dragon Ball*, becomes a mother in *Dragon Ball Z*, fulfilling in this way the assigned, patriarchal role imposed on women by Japanese society. The message from *Digimon* and *Dragon Ball Z* is that girls may be strong and talented, but when they grow up, their role as a woman is to become a mother, and take care of their sons whilst staying at home.

That said, Chichi is a secondary character, so her influence is not as large as that of Bulma, one of the main characters in both *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z*. Unlike Chichi, who is a martial-arts fighter, Bulma is a scientific woman—a computer and mechanical engineer—who every now and then she uses her sexuality to obtain the things she wants in order to continue her adventures.



In an article titled “The Capsule Corp Legacy: Technology and Women in Anime”,⁶⁶ writer Paige Sammartino explains Bulma’s prodigious role as the inheritor of the most powerful technology company in the Dragon Ball universe. She explains that Dragon Ball

begins not with our hero’s goals and aspirations, after all, but those of the female co-lead. A sixteen-year-old on a mission to summon a legendary dragon and ask him for a dreamboat boyfriend, Bulma kicks off the narrative a little sassy, a little sexy, and more than a little selfish, making her a perfect foil for the mind-numbingly pure Goku. Over the course of the series, Bulma is the surrogate big sister, the confidant, the scientist, the engineer, the mother, the rebel, and the president of the world’s foremost source of technology.

Bulma is an important character and without her, the plot of *Dragon Ball* would not have begun, as she is the character who first starts searching for the dragon balls in order to ask for her wish... which is to marry a rich, handsome man. Even if Bulma becomes a mother in Dragon Ball Z, she is still a scientist that creates inventions, including a time machine to go back in time and save the world. Though she does not appear as much in Dragon Ball Z as she does in Dragon Ball, she is still an important character without whom the world would not have been saved (several times).

Sammartino also talks about other anime shows such as *Full Metal Alchemist* (2003, DIR Mizushima Seiji; 2009, DIR Irie Yasuhiro), where Winry, a secondary female character, creates (and is obsessed with) machines, in an atypical portrayal of a woman in the role of a mechanic. Another instance of a female character in a scientific position is in *Eden of the East* (2009, DIR Kamiyama Kenji), where Morimi Saki is a computer programmer. *Robotics;Notes* (2012, DIR Nomura Kazuya), is an anime in which one of the main characters, Senomiya Akiho, is a young, enthusiastic girl who is the chairwoman of a school’s robotic clubs. By the end of the show, and after many struggles, she and her coworkers manage to

⁶⁶ <<http://womenwriteaboutcomics.com/2015/12/22/capsule-corp-legacy-technology-women-anime/>>.

build a giant robot, inspired by a *mecha* anime they all saw when they were children.

There certainly exists anime that portrays women performing scientific roles, most notably the character Bulma in the popular *Dragon Ball* franchise. Sammartino, however, over-states things when she says that “across genres in anime, women’s visibility in STEM [Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics] fields has increased in the new millennium. Anime fans can see female characters excelling in fields that mirror what scientists are accomplishing today” (np). Sammartino herself only mentions three instances where such assessments might apply. Of course, there can be many reasons why Sammartino only mentioned those specific shows (e.g. space and time constraints), but the point of the matter is that only a minority of anime series portray women in scientific or non-motherly/patriarchal roles, especially when the genre is *shōnen* or *shōjo* anime. This, combined with the manner in which female characters are drawn, are the two main ways in which the forces of hegemony operate in Japan, and hence in anime: A woman must be a wife and a mother, a woman must be submissive, but she must be at the same time incredibly sensuous.

2.2.6. Conclusion: Hegemonic genders in anime

There are several problematics with the portrayal of gender in anime that I have outlined in the previous paragraphs. In the first section I analysed *shōjo*, in which love stories feature gender-bending characters—women dressing as men, and a few men dressing as women—which, nonetheless, end up reflecting heterosexual relationships; the characters who do the gender-bending end up “dating” someone from the opposite sex. *Shōjo* has, since the pre-war period of Japan, not only helped manifest, or perhaps even create girl’s latent sexual desires, but has also helped direct the fantasies they have toward the heterosexual and

heteronormative relationships required in Japanese society.

Mahō shōjo—the magical girl— a sub-genre of *shōjo*, features even more normative relationships than in *shōjo*, with girls in soft, “magical” or “mystical” roles, gaining powers from the stars or moon in order to fight evil. For Saitō (2001) the magical girl, even if “powered by the moon or the stars”, simply continues to reproduce the gender roles a woman must have in Japan.

Finally, *shōnen* anime is a genre typically aimed at boys, and is infused with male-gazing, with women portrayed in heavily sexualised ways and submissively clumsy. As Mulvey (1975) explains, this kind of portrayal is not just for the characters inside the show, but also for the show’s actual spectators. These portrayals also make female spectators desirous of the female image shown on screen (Ayako 2010, 155). Even if, naturally, there are exceptions to the case (e.g. *Robotics;Notes*), most *shōnen* anime features female characters in a heavily sexualised form. Shows like *Samurai Girls* are truly designed around the sexualised, male-gazing-portrayals of the female characters. Just like in *shōjo* anime, *shōnen* anime follows a specific, tried formula, with, as Saitō (2001) explains, “Magic for the girls, and guns for the boys”.

As Nakamura and Ōnuchi (2006) explain, when characters in specific gender roles are shown to children from an early age, those children will come to accept these images as the standard social and gender norms, and think this attitude towards women’s gender roles is the way things are supposed to be. Anime has a strong effect on the lives of its viewers, especially when the show in question is a popular children’s anime like *Digimon*. This effect happens because of the message encoded in the anime, something Stuart Hall, a political activist, sociologist and Marxist theorist, writes about. He explains that television

programmes are encoded with a meaning that is then decoded by the audience, and that this meaning incites specific social practices that benefit a dominant ideology (1980). For Hall the circulation of products is the equivalent of distributing specific social practices that are consumed through a specific product. Applying Hall's theories of the encoding and decoding of meaning through television to the particular case of Japanese media, the noticeable aspect to be observed is that these meanings, originally encoded in an anime, are thus transferred (or translated) and encoded in the plethora of products (e.g. CDs, (fan)magazines, etc. as shown in *Perfect Blue*) that are part of Japan's media-mix. Because in this way, Japan's hegemonic ideals of masculinity are disseminated through different media by a series of human (the consumers) and non-human (the objects, such as lunch boxes and postcards) actors (Latour 2005).

In Bruno Latour's⁶⁷ theories human and non-human actors are endowed with agency, which is something that makes difference, produces transformation, leaves a trace, and enters an account (2005, 53), and can induce an action (1997b). In this case the action on part of human and non-human actors results in the dissemination of a specific meaning (or message) of hegemonic masculinity encoded in anime that is "transferred" or "translated" into a plethora of products that further expand the "reaching capabilities" of the meaning. It is in this product diversification that lies the strength of the hegemonic message, because as Latour explains it, "strength does not come from concentration, purity and unity, but from dissemination, heterogeneity and the careful plaiting of weak ties" (Latour 1996, 370). Through the heterogeneity of products—Japan's media-mix—the hegemonic masculinity is expanded, diversified and further cemented in Japanese society, and through translations it

⁶⁷ A French sociologist.

moves to other places.

Anime is aired at very specific times for maximum exposure. This indeed was my own personal experience, with *Dragon Ball* airing on national TV as soon as I arrived from school. This formula of airing a show at a specific time means that “leisure is industrialized, duration is homogenized, even excitement is routinized” (Gitlin 1979, 255) in order to create the maximum consumption of a product, and in doing so disseminating specific patriarchal gender portrayals.

In anime women are frequently placed in traditional, motherly roles, such as taking care of children and cleaning the house, whilst men are lawyers and astronauts, and have their own businesses, as I exemplified with *Digimon*. Some changes in the character portrayals may happen over time, but these changes are confined, and “the power of corporate ideology over character types remains very strong, and sets limits on the permissible” (Gitlin 1979, 261). This is the heteronormative message ultimately encoded in most anime.

The previous pages have discussed how sexual difference and gendered behaviour are presented in largely heteronormative and conventional ways in popular types of anime. As I will demonstrate in the pages that follow, Kon Satoshi takes a critical stance towards this heteronormative convention with a different portrayal of female characters in anime. I first examine what others have written on gender and Kon, and include theories of my own regarding the matter.

2.3. Gender in the films of Kon Satoshi

Little work has been carried out concerning Kon's perspectives on gender. This is surprising because most of his female characters, as I will show here, are strong and independent. As I explained in the previous section, this is rare in anime, making Kon's work worthy of analysis. In this section I review what other scholars have said about Kon and gender, and concentrate primarily on the work by Susan Napier (2006) on Kon in general, and Gabrielle Scott (2010) on *Perfect Blue*. The themes of gender and the *idols* in *Perfect Blue* are discussed in detail.

2.3.1. *Magnetic Rose*

Susan Napier, who has published extensively on anime and has written one of the quintessential books on the subject, writes that, even from the first screenplay Kon co-wrote with Morimoto Kenji, Kon is clearly fascinated with “intriguing and female characters and their complex and often problematic relation to illusion, memory, and performance” (2006, 26). (2006, 26). In *Magnetic Rose* two astronauts (Miguel and Heinz) answer a distress call from an abandoned spaceship, and find an opera singer, Eva, who, as it turns out, is an illusion that makes the astronauts go insane. The reason is that Eva was, a long time ago, a famous opera singer who had a lover, and yet, this lover, along with her audience, turned their backs on her when she lost her voice. When Eva reappears in front of the astronauts, she takes revenge on them, making them go insane by causing them to hallucinate about the lives they would like to have or long to return to, just as she dreams of going back to her days of glory as an opera singer. In *Magnetic Rose*, “Eva's construction is particularly complex because, though on the one hand she is performing for the male, on the other hand she is

avenging herself against the male and her former audience” (Napier 2006, 28). Eva loved performing for her audience, but as an illusion she entrances the two men who (unluckily) encounter her. In this way, by killing the two unsuspecting astronauts, she exacts retribution on her lover and her audience who turned their backs on her. Perhaps Eva is exacting a specific revenge on each astronaut: Miguel for being a lascivious man and falling in love with her right away, losing sight of what is real, and Heinz for letting his daughter back on Earth fall off a roof and die.



Fig.2.12. *Magnetic Rose*'s Eva singing.



Fig.2.13. Heinz holds a hologram of Emily, his dead daughter.

When Miguel activates a hologram in the abandoned spaceship, he is surrounded by roses in a circling shot. (This type of shot was first used in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*). In this case—technical discussion aside—it is notable to see the use of roses, one of the characteristics of *shōjo* anime, along with the use of European motifs and architecture. All the motifs you would expect in *shōjo* are found in *Magnetic Rose*. Eva's presentation is not, however, a *shōjo* one—for example, her hair is too thin for the genre. More importantly, Eva's personality is unlike that of most heroines of *shōjo*. She does not act in a submissive manner towards men, and actually exacts a torturous revenge on them. And despite the name *Magnetic Rose*, the film is far from a *shōjo* in its plot. It is a horror story about a female apparition delivering her revenge against men. After Kon co-wrote the script for *Magnetic Rose*, he was ready to direct his first feature film, *Perfect Blue*.

2.3.2. Gender, violence and performance in *Perfect Blue*

As explained in section 1.2., in *Perfect Blue* Mima goes insane due to a series of events that upset her mental stability. She is confronted with questions about her own reality: “Am I real?” Is a recurrent question in the film. Yet one of the main topics in the film is not only the perception of reality, but also the gender issues that the film addresses, specially related to the *idols* and the gaze. I deal with these problematics in the following pages, and compare the gender performance in *Perfect Blue* with the genres from the previous section.

2.3.2. Japan’s new idols

Sie ist ein Modell und sie sieht gut aus
 Ich nähme sie heut' gerne mit zu mir nach Haus
 Sie wirkt so kühl, an sie kommt niemand 'ran
 Doch vor der Kamera, da zeigt sie was sie kann
 - Kraftwerk, *Das Modell*⁶⁸

One of *Perfect Blue*'s main themes is that of the *idol*.⁶⁹ An *idol*, in the simplest of definitions, is simply a “female or male Japanese pop star”. Here, I discuss female pop stars only, since *Perfect Blue* deals only with them, and they are also the most common and popular ones in Japan. An *idol*, however, as Galbraith and Karlin minutely explain in their book *Idols and Celebrity in Japanese Media Culture* (2012, 2), is not just a pop star:

⁶⁸ COMPOSED BY Ralf Hütter, Karl Bartos. LYRICS WITH Emil Schult. ALBUM *Die Mensch-Maschine* (1978).

⁶⁹ The word is kept in italics so that it refers to the Japanese sense of the word, *aidoru*.

“Idols” is a word used in Japan to refer to highly produced and promoted singers, models, and media personalities. Idols can be male or female, and tend to be young, or present themselves as such; they appeal to various demographics, and often broad cross sections of society. Idols perform across genres and interconnected media platforms at the same time. They are not expected to be greatly talented at any one thing, for example singing, dancing, or acting. From popular music and photo albums to fashion and accessories, idols are produced and packaged to maximize consumption. At the same time, they are the currency of exchange in the promotion and advertising of all manner of other products and services.

Initially, *idols* could be said to be the equivalent of a pop star, but they are different from Western pop stars in the sense that the Japanese *idol* is quite literally everywhere, existing in a wide variety of products such as magazines, postcards, CDs, dresses, dolls, etc. This, of course, relates to Japan’s media-mix, explained in section 2.2.1. *Idols’* presence is much more ubiquitous, and much more scrutinised, than their Western counterparts’, to the point that members of *AKB48* (Japan’s most famous *idol* group) cannot engage in any sort of “amorous” relationship with anyone because it would officially constitute a breach of their contract.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ <<http://akb48cafeshops.com/akihabara/english>>.

<<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/culture/2013/02/01/music/akb48-members-penance-shows-flaws-in-idol-culture/>>.



Fig.2.14. A picture of AKB48 performing live.

Ian Martin, a journalist for the Japan Times, writes a punishing review of *idol* fan culture.⁷¹ He says that “the deeper truth is that *idol* fan culture, as well as the closely related *anime* and manga fan culture, is institutionally incapable of dealing with independence in young women” (n.p.). For Martin, *idols* feature a type of portrayal of women that “seeks out and fetishizes weaknesses and vulnerabilities and calls it *moé*;⁷² it demands submissiveness, endless tearful displays of gratitude, a lack of confidence, and complete control over their sexual independence” (ibid n.p.). There are many media events around the *idols*, e.g. concerts, autograph signing sessions, photo sessions, songs, videos that make the worshipping of *idols* “more than just fanaticism. It is a media event and a public spectacle” (Galbraith and Karlin 2012, 1). The *idol* is there to be marketed, consumed as a

⁷¹ <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp>>.

⁷² “*Moé*” (Japanese 萌え) is a Japanese word to refer to people who have an attraction towards anime, manga or game characters.

product, and to be possessed sexually in the minds of fans—and sometimes in real life too, as *idols* frequently suffer attacks from fans.⁷³

2.3.4. The *idol* and the gaze in *Perfect Blue*

The multiple issues surrounding the consumption of *idols* is a major concern in *Perfect Blue*, where Kon criticises this consumption through the “gazes” directed at the *idols*, as the film itself centres on action that “is determined by the variety of gazes directed at Mima” (Napier 2006, 32). As discussed in section 2.2.5., Mulvey explains that the male gaze is addressed through camera movements that emphasise a woman’s physicality (1975). In the case of *Perfect Blue*, the gaze is directly exhibited in two manners: (1) Through the technical aspects of the film itself, i.e. by presenting the *idols* and their bodies through specific camera movements and shots; and (2) by showing, as part of the film’s plot, the spectators who gaze and film Mima in the film itself. In other words, one gaze is using the film’s shots and directorial decisions to employ them, and another is the gaze carried out in the film’s actual script and action.

In the first, Kon employs the male gaze in the film to actually *criticise* the gaze itself and the consumerism of *idols*, and the frequent path towards pornography that *idols* take.⁷⁴ This can be seen specifically in two cases. First, it is shown in the scenes where Mima is still performing as an *idol* in *Cham!*. Kon shows detailed movements of *Cham!*’s white and pink dresses with their skirts going up and down, as well as camera shots going from below and

⁷³ See: <<http://en.rocketnews24.com/2014/05/25/newsflash-akb48-members-attacked-by-saw-wielding-fan-at-handshake-event/>>, and <<http://en.rocketnews24.com/2016/06/08/japanese-idol-singer-stabbed-over-20-times-by-fan-regains-consciousness/>>.

⁷⁴ See: <<http://www.thedailybeast.com/japans-kiddie-porn-empire-bye-bye>>.

upwards, covering the *idol's* entire body. Kon also includes shots concentrating on Mima's upper body. Finally, Kon shows Mima's naked photo shoot. Mima, with her naked body gazes playfully, innocently and sexually at the viewer, in the film at the camera of the photographer taking the pictures, Kon's match cuts⁷⁵ going from Mima's body to the camera and backwards.

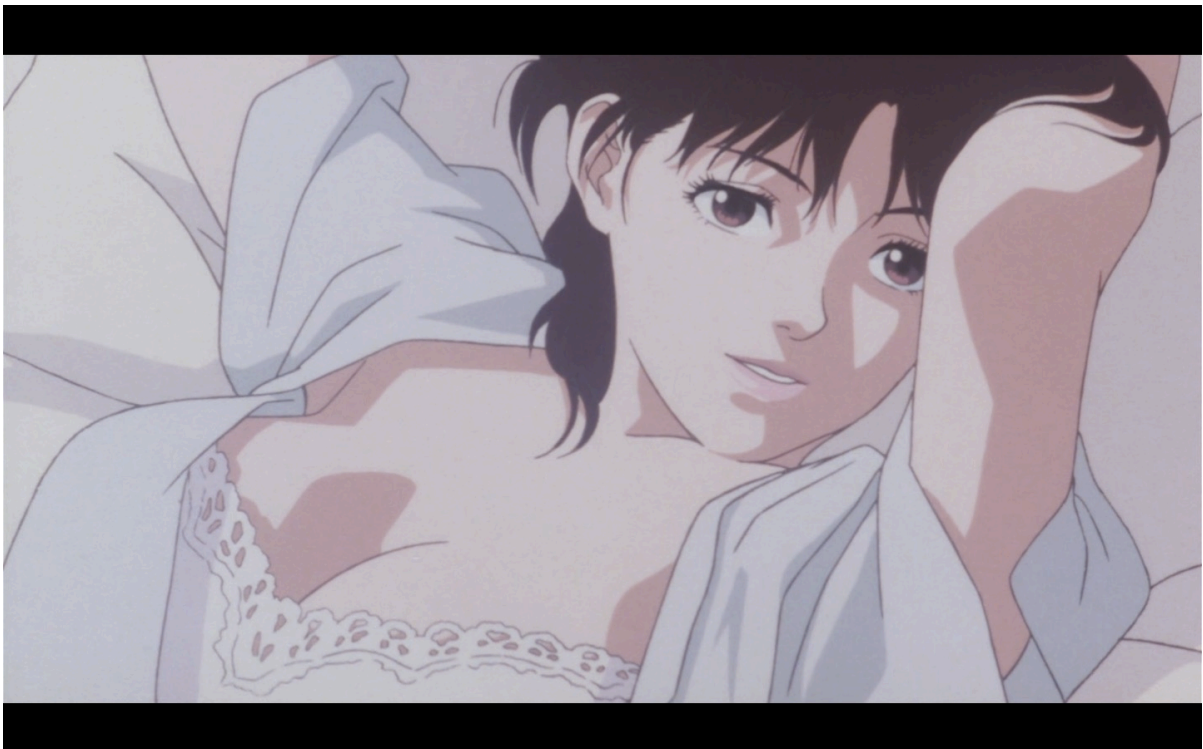


Fig.2.15. Mima posing for the photographer.

⁷⁵ *Raccord* in French. A match cut is a “cut between two shots which match graphically. This match establishes a sense of continuity and interconnectedness between two different spatial or temporal spheres (space and time), and produces a sense of importance in the connection, imbedding the different spheres with a sense of metaphor or symbolic relationship” (Duckworth, n.p.).

The second manner in which the gaze appears in *Perfect Blue* is within the film itself. This is Kon's more direct criticism of the gaze and the consumerism of *idols*, which he produces by showing the precise individuals—the *wota*—who gaze at them. Through the use of frequent match cuts Kon juxtaposes the fans' cameras and Mima's dancing as an *idol*, or of her performance as an actress. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there is a scene in which Mima is posing naked for a photographer. In this case the scene shows Kon's decision to sexualise Mima in showing her white body and pink lips whilst at the same time criticising the action by taking the viewer back to the recurrent theme in the film, which is the use of cameras. By making match cuts between Mima's body and the camera, Kon criticises the consumerism of the female body.

And yet "Even before we see her, we hear about her as the object of the gaze of various fans who wish to possess her, one by recording her 'voice', another by discussing her in print, others by interpolating themselves into her concert by disrupting it" (Napier 2006, 32). The purpose of the *idol* is not only to entertain, but to be consumed and possessed by a mostly-male audience; to become a repository of the audiences' desires. Mima is an *idol* who caters to the *wotas'* masturbatory fantasies by performing for them and appearing in various media such as print, albums and live in concerts. For example, "in one striking image early on, the focus shifts to the male audience all with their cameras at eye level, consuming Mima through the lens. As the film continues, it provides more and more examples of would-be possession" (Napier 2006, 30). Fans make Mima a part of their never-ending *idol* collection, possessing her through their camera lenses, adding her to a collection of pictures. Through the process of taking pictures of Mima, the fans are exerting an active form of violence against her. They may not be hurting Mima physically, as Me-Mania does when he attempts

to rape her, but they are possessing her through their photographs.

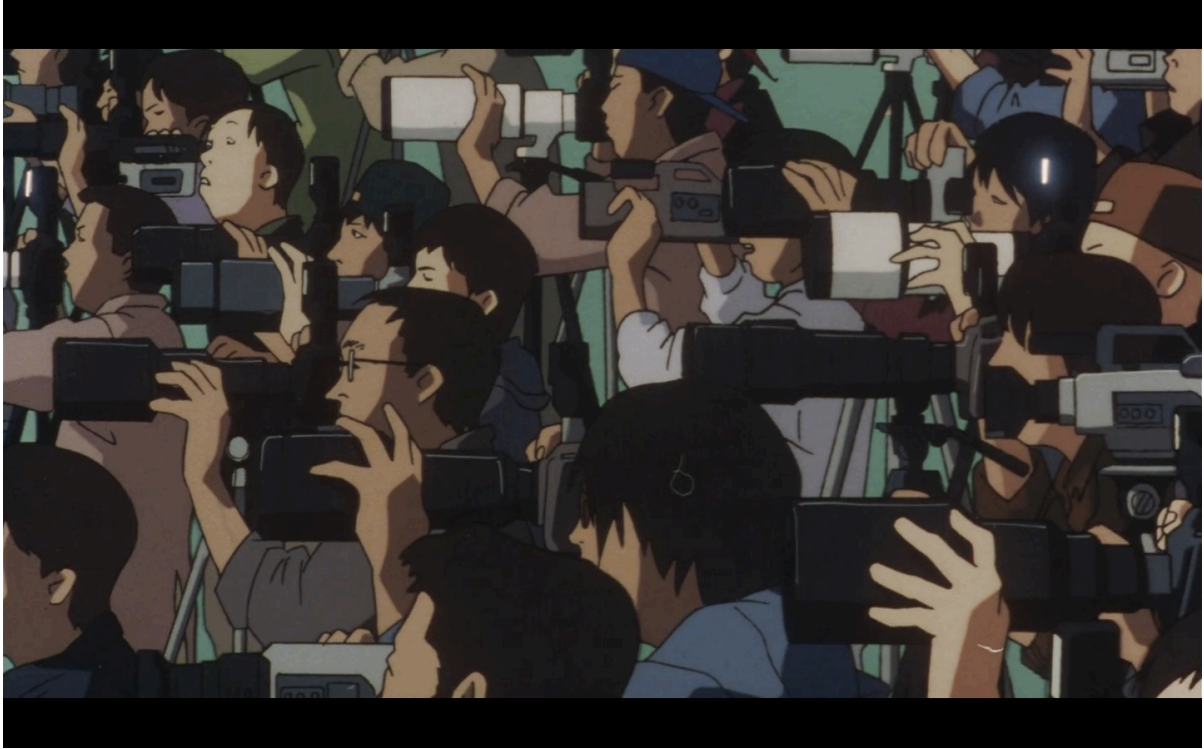


Fig.2.16. The fans taking pictures of Mima.



Fig.2.17. A fanzine (fan magazine) with *Cham!* on the cover.

Mima is an entertainer as the leader of the *idol* group *Cham!*, performing stereotypical *idol* (pop) songs, dancing, acting and singing in the expected manner, but all this changes the moment she decides to become an actress. When she does that Mima is actually stating that she is in control of the decisions involving her career, making her a strong character determined to pursue the kind of profession and life she desires. She is embracing her *ninjō*, her personal feelings. This is despite the pressure from her fans and Rumi, who desire and demand that she follow her *giri*—her duties and obligations towards society—which in this case are her duties as an *idol* to her fans and manager. Rumi does not approve Mima's decision to become an actress, probably reflecting her own frustration at not being an *idol* herself anymore. She sees herself in Mima and sees Mima as her successor, but this image is shattered like a broken mirror when Mima decides to leave the *idol* world. This career change drives some fans—like Me-Mania—to insanity because they feel that “she has betrayed

them”. In changing the status quo and deciding by herself to choose the career path and life she wants, Mima not only destroys the image the *wota* had and possessed of her, but also puts herself at great physical and mental risk. In spite of the strength of her choices, Mima is defenceless against the violent reaction of her fans and Rumi, at least until the end of the film when she fights both Rumi and Me-Mania. In the end Mima survives the physical attacks she suffers at the hands of the latter two characters, yet it is not entirely clear to the viewer whether or not she is insane at the end of the film; the finale is open to interpretation.

Kon has remained relatively underground to this day because of his complex plots featuring dream-within-a-dream sequences, long, panoramic shots and an editing that is uncharacteristic of anime. Yet I believe the most important reason is the fact that Kon’s main characters are not the stereotypical female anime characters; these are not the “stock characters” Gitlin (1979, 254) talks about. His portrayal of female characters is one of strong, independent leads that do not need to show their bodies to prove their worth as characters. By including a different type of character and story Kon does not need to resort to the anime tropes that characterise the genre; he takes a feminist position by showing the viewer a human, vulnerable yet strong female lead that does not conform to the industry’s stereotypes of “character type” (ibid 260). Kon also employs the male gaze in the film precisely to criticise the gaze itself—of fans consuming Mima with their cameras—and the treatment of women in Japanese society. In showing the way in which *idols* are consumed, Kon is criticising a social, capitalist system that considers women as simple objects to be purchased and consumed through a camera lens.

But how is all of this reflected, specifically, through language? The following section, then, addresses the Japanese language, its genderlects, *yakuwarigo* (role language) and their

use in Kon's films.

2.4. A historical overview of the Japanese language and its genderlects

In this section I provide a historical linguistic report on how, and why, Japanese is a “gendered” language. The diachronic analysis discussed here concentrates on the Edo⁷⁶ Period (1603-1868), the period when much of the standard and current usage of the Japanese language originates. I then proceeds onwards, studying the Tai. The following pages describe how the “gendered speech” of the Japanese language has evolved, how it is used now, and in conclusion, how it is applied to the analysis of this work.

In the Japanese language there is a clear relationship between language and gender. In Japan, men and boys are expected to talk in a specific way, women and girls in another, meaning that Japanese has a “gendered” speech style (apart from the very different formal and informal styles), that denote the sex of the speaker (Tanaka 2004, 2). Lidia Tanaka—expert in Japanese discourse and gender analysis, professor at La Trobe University Melbourne—explains that Japanese boys and girls are taught from an early age how to speak in a gendered way, and this is reinforced through their formative years. Native speakers of Japanese will use different pronouns, sentence final particles and lexicon (Tanaka *ibid*) throughout their life. Hiroko Furukawa, professor of Japanese socio-linguistics at Tohoku Gakuin University in Sendai, Japan, concurs by saying “Japanese is particularly a gender-marking language” (2016, 1), which means that boys and men, and girls and women will use, for example, a set of specific verb forms according to their respective gender.

⁷⁶ Present-day Tokyo.

Concerning the history of Japanese as a gendered language, Endo (in Tanaka 2004, 26) illustrates that

the ‘womanly/feminine’ language was systematically inculcated in women from the beginning of the Edo period (1603–1868). These texts were based on Confucianism, and contained teachings on how women should behave and speak, e.g. it was considered inappropriate for women to use *Kango Kotoba* (words of Chinese origin); instead, they were encouraged to use a set of words known as *Yamato Kotoba* (“Yamato Words”, words of Japanese origin), which derived from the *Nyooobo Kotoba*.

By the Edo period, the Japanese language was already stratified by gender, with the use of certain words corresponding to specific genders. There was also a prestige element to this stratification, as the use of Chinese words was discouraged in favour of Japanese ones as a way to ensure the complete isolation from the world, a process that had begun during the Edo era. Linguistically speaking, the language of Japanese Edo, as Bjarke Frellesvig—professor of Japanese linguistics at Oxford University—explains “is no direct continuation of any particular local dialect of Japanese, but came into being and developed through close contact between speakers of different varieties in an urban setting, although many features of the special colloquial language of Edo have not survived to this day” (2010, 278). Since Edo was the capital of Japan during its namesake period, the influx and varieties of the language did not result due to foreign influence, but rather due to the dialectal, social and informal/formal influences that occurred within Japan itself, as Japan was almost completely closed to the world during the Edo Period.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ Especially *not* due to foreign influence since, as mentioned before, Japan was almost completely isolated from the world during this period. During Edo Period, Japan carried out trade with the Dutch “in the man-made islet of Deshima” (Jansen 1989, 4), and with the Chinese “through its control of the Okinawan kingdom” (ibid). This happened, that is, until the country was forced to open its doors by the United States under Commodore Matthew Perry’s threat, when “the last three shoguns were largely overwhelmed by events following the arrival of the Perry expedition and the demands by the Western powers that Japan open its ports to foreign trade” (Whitney 1991, 22). The sheer power of Perry’s ships, against an industrially-fossilised Japan, meant that

However, even if the basis for a specific manner of speaking was set in the Edo Period, the Meiji Period (1868-1912) was, as Frellesvig (2010, 379) explains:

a period of unification in political terms: the creation or building of a unified, modern nation state. This unification effort also affected language, in two main ways: one was the unification, or alignment, of the spoken (i.e., contemporary) and the written language; and the other was the unification of the different varieties of Japanese spoken through the country as, or under, one national language, that is to say, the creation of a national, standard language.

Frellesvig (2010, 380) explains that, in establishing a completely centralised, all-powerful capital, the government could exert control over people, and this was done through the eradication of different dialects of Japanese that were barely intelligible to each other, as seen in Furukawa Koshōken's "Notes from a Journey to the East" (Shibata, 1965).

It is during the Meiji period that, as Tanaka explains, "women were taught to speak in a soft, gentle voice, and to avoid using 'masculine' words or blunt expressions. The Meiji government further emphasised the "genderisation" of the Japanese language, and life in general. In this period the ideal woman was that of the "good wife and wise mother" (2004, 25). It is in the Meiji period that current gender and linguistic standards were created. The Meiji period was one of great turmoil and rapid social change in Japan, due to the nation's rejection of its old customs and embracing of European ones. It is, then, in the Meiji Era, during the rise of the Japanese Empire and with a heavily-centralised Japanese government in Tokyo (formerly Edo) that current Japanese gender norms and values started to take shape.

the country had no choice but to open itself to trade with the United States.

2.5. Gender-specific characteristics of the Japanese language

2.5.1. Specific linguistic markers

The analysis carried out in this dissertation is very much inspired by Hiramoto's (2013) study of *Cowboy Bebop*. I have chosen to analyse first person pronouns (1PPs), second person pronouns (2PPs) and sentence final particles (*Shuujoshi* in Japanese, SFPs) because “the use of these features is known to be highly gender-dependent” (Hiramoto 2013, 55), i.e. they are gendered markers. Thanks to these markers, the listener can discern if a character is presenting him or herself—or rather, if the scriptwriter is presenting him as such, as I explain in section 2.6.—as male or female, even if it is not explicitly stated in the text. The reason for this is that male and female characters use specific markers according to their own gender, so even if, for example, the reader does not know if a character in a book is male or female, the reader will be able to discern the character's gender based on the way they speak, meaning that Japanese is a “gendered language”.

The Japanese language also has speech styles that vary according to the degree of formality. These are defined by many factors, amongst them event, topic, speakers, status and roles (Tanaka 2004, 1). Tanaka explains that the *keigo*, the honorific speech, is a “complex honorific system, in which the speech style is determined by the relationship between interlocutors and the formality of the interaction, which includes a developed system of verbs that either elevate the listener and his/her group members or humble the speaker in order to show more respect towards the listener” (2004, 18). Hence, depending on the “rank” or the “hierarchy and role” (ibid), the speaker will use specific verbs (informal or formal), pronouns, and SFPs. As Tanaka asserts, “the fact that these cultural notions play such an important role in defining speech style provides a strong argument in favour of their inclusion

in the research on language and gender” (Tanaka 2004, 20).

One way in which *keigo* can be analysed is through the examination of verbs correlating to a man or woman’s social role, as well as through the analysis of the use of specific pronouns, since Japanese possesses “a personal pronoun system that is defined by the gender of the speaker and the relationship between the interlocutors” (Tanaka 2004, 19). The use of SFPs in Japanese has been an area of much research, e.g. Abe (1998), Nakamura (2002, 2013), Inoue (2003), and recently Hiramoto (2013), and Furukawa (2017). Inoue (2003) explains that, for instance, SFPs are “recognized as one of the most salient linguistic elements associated with ‘women’s language’” (317), “reflect the “the socially-accepted and culturally-constituted gendered demeanor” (ibid 319) of the Japanese language,⁷⁸ and “are one of the formal linguistic units most systematically linked to and normalized by the prevailing Japanese gender ideology” (ibid). This means that the SFPs are highly-marked; by noticing a SFP a viewer can discern whether a character is using a neutral, feminine or highly-feminine language, and this is important because it shows the speakers position compared to the other character or interlocutor. In the case of women, this position is frequently a lower one. For instance, Inoue (2003) certain SFP “such as *wa*, *wayo*, *no*, *noyo*, *dawa*, *kashira*, mark softness, uncertainty, and other ‘weak’ affect [sic]. These came to be “female” final particles and came to be the gender marker of femaleness as a consequence of women complying with the socially-accepted and culturally-constituted gendered demeanor” (319).

⁷⁸ Demeanour, to be precise, is “an element of a person’s ceremonial behaviour, typically, conveyed through deportment, dress, and bearing, which serves to express the personal quality or desirability” (Goffman 1967, in Ide and Yoshida 1999, 477).

However, the work by Hideko Abe, a sociolinguist of the Japanese language, concentrates on how a Japanese woman can actually use particular feminine SFPs such as *-yo* or *-no* in order to “avoid deference and assert herself, but only when the speaker has more [social] power [capital]” (1998, 63). Hence, in specific cases, a female character in an anime might use a feminine SFP, emphasising her femininity, but having more social capital than the other character/interlocutor. It is important to understand and analyse the context in which each specific SFP is used.

The following table based on Ide and Yoshida (1999, 471) explains the different types of pronouns used by adult males and females in different social situations (formal, normal, deprecatory), as well as examples of SFPs used by males and females.

Table 2.0. 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs based on Ide and Yoshida (1999).

| Gender | 1PPs | 2PPs | SFPs |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Female and male | <i>Watakushi</i> (formal) <i>Watashi</i> (normal) | <i>Anata</i> (normal) | <i>Ne</i> (isn't it?, don't you think?) <i>yo</i> (creates the feeling of assertion or emphasis) |
| Female (only) | <i>Atashi</i> (normal) <i>Atakushi</i> | - | <i>wa</i> (softer nuance) <i>kashira</i> (indicates doubt) |
| Male (only) | <i>Boku</i> (normal) <i>Ore</i> (deprecatory) | <i>Kimi</i> (normal) <i>Omae</i> (deprecatory) | <i>na</i> (rough and vigorous variation of <i>ne</i>) <i>zo</i> (strong emphasis and determination) <i>ze</i> (used to call special attention to something; rude) |

Table 2.1. 1PPs, 2PPs based on Ide and Yoshida (1999).

Table 16.2 Sociolinguistic structure of personal pronouns

| Person | Speaker Style | Adult | | Young child | |
|----------------------|------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| | | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| First person pronoun | Formal | <i>watakusi, watasi</i> | <i>watakusi, watasi</i> | None | <i>watasi</i> |
| | Normal | <i>boku</i> | <i>watasi, atasi</i> | <i>boku</i> | FN**+ <i>tyan</i> |
| | Deprecatory | <i>ore</i> | None | <i>ore</i> | None |
| Seond person pronoun | Formal | <i>anata*</i> | <i>anata*</i> | (<i>kimi</i>)*** | (<i>anata</i>) |
| | Normal | <i>kimi</i> | <i>anata</i> | FN + <i>kun</i> | FN + <i>kun</i> |
| | Deprecatory | <i>omae</i> | None | FN + <i>tyan</i> | FN + <i>tyan</i> |
| | | <i>omae</i> | None | <i>omae</i> | None |

* not applicable in addressing superiors

** FN represents first name

*** () begins to appear around the age of five

In this study I will concentrate in analysing the 1PPs *watashi*, *watakushi*, *ore* and *boku*, and the 2PP *anata*, *kimi* and *omae*, since those are the ones used in the film.

Table 2.2. Sentence final particles.

| Sentence final particles (SFPs) | | |
|---|---|--|
| Women and men | Women (only) | Men (only) |
| <i>Ne</i> (isn't it?, don't you think?) <i>yo</i> (creates the feeling of assertion or emphasis) <i>no</i> (explanations or emotional emphasis) | <i>wa</i> (softer nuance) <i>kashira</i> (indicates doubt) | <i>na</i> (rough and vigorous variation of <i>ne</i>) <i>zo</i> (strong emphasis and determination) <i>ze</i> (used to call special attention to something; rude) |

These linguistic markers can be divided into specific features relating to how strongly or moderately feminine or masculine they are, or whether they are neutral features (Okamoto 1995). The following data (sections 2.5.2., 2.5.3. and 2.5.4.) are copied from the article by Hiramoto (2013, 60-61), and are included in order to have a template and theoretical basis for examining the SFPs in my analysis.

Table 2.3. Feminine features.

| Feminine features |
|--|
| Strongly feminine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SFP <i>wa</i> for mild emphasis or its variants: <i>Iku wa (ne)</i>. (‘I’ll go.’) – SFP <i>nano</i> after a noun in a statement: <i>Inu nano</i>. (‘It’s a dog.’) – SFP <i>no</i> followed by <i>ne</i> or <i>yo ne</i> for seeking confirmation or agreement: <i>Iku no (yo)(ne)</i>. (‘You will go, right?’) – SFP <i>no</i> followed by <i>yo</i> for assertion: <i>Iku no (yo)</i>. (‘You are going, you know?’) – SFP <i>kashira</i> ‘I wonder ~’: <i>Iku kashira</i>. (‘I wonder if she’ll go.’) |
| Moderately feminine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SFP <i>no</i> after a plain verb or i-ADJ for emphasis or explanation in a statement: <i>Iku no?</i> (‘Will you go?’) – Auxiliary <i>desho(o)</i> for expressing probability or for seeking agreement or confirmation, or followed by <i>ne</i>: <i>Iku desho(o) (ne)?</i> (‘You will go, right?’) |

Table 2.4. Masculine features

| Masculine features |
|--|
| Strongly masculine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – SFP <i>ze</i> and <i>zo</i> for assertion: <i>Iku ze</i>. ('I'm going.') – The plain imperative form of a verb alone or followed by <i>yo</i>: <i>Ike (yo)</i>. 'Go!') – The phonological form <i>ee</i> instead of <i>ai</i> and <i>oi</i>: (<i>Ikenee</i>. 'I can't go.') – The particle <i>no</i> followed by <i>ka</i> or <i>ka yo</i> for seeking confirmation or agreement: (<i>Iku no ka (yo)?</i> 'Will you go?') – The auxiliary verb <i>da</i> for declaration followed by <i>ga</i> or <i>ga na</i>: (<i>Soo da ga (na)</i>. 'It is so.') |
| Moderately masculine |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The auxiliary verb <i>da</i> for declaration followed by <i>na</i> or <i>yo na</i> or <i>ga na</i>: <i>Soo da (yo)(na)</i>. ('It must be so.') – The interrogative marker <i>kai</i>: (<i>Iku kai</i>. 'Will you go?') |

Table 2.5. Neutral features.

| Neutral features |
|---|
| <p>– The plain form of a verb or <i>i</i>-Adjective for assertion: <i>Iku</i>. ('I'll go.')</p> <p>An <i>i</i>-adjective is every adjective in Japanese that ends with an <i>i</i>, such as <i>ii</i> (good), <i>oishii</i> (delicious), <i>omoi</i> (heavy), etc., as opposed to the <i>na</i>-adjectives, such as <i>shizuka (na)</i> (quiet), <i>taisetsu (na)</i> (important), <i>teinei (na)</i> (polite), etc.</p> <p>– SFP <i>yo</i> followed by <i>ne</i> for seeking agreement or confirmation: <i>Iku yo ne</i>. ('You will go, right?')</p> <p>– The negative auxiliary <i>ja nai</i> for mild assertion or to seek agreement: <i>Iku janai</i>. ('You will go, right?')</p> <p>– The particle <i>ka na</i> 'I wonder': <i>Iku ka na</i>. ('I wonder if she'll go.')</p> <p>– The gerundive form of a verb used alone or followed by the particle <i>ne</i> or <i>sa</i>: <i>Itte sa</i>. ('I went and then [...]').</p> <p>– The exclamatory particle <i>naa</i>: <i>Ii naa</i>. ('It's great!')</p> <p>– The auxiliary verb <i>da</i> alone for declaration (or its variants <i>da ne</i>, <i>da yo</i>, or <i>da yo ne</i>): <i>Soo da (yo) (ne)</i>. ('It is so.')</p> <p>– The particle <i>yo</i> after a plain form of a verb or <i>i</i>-adjective for assertion: <i>Iku yo</i>. ('We're going.')</p> |

The following chart by Ide and Yoshida (1999, 464) explains all the SFPs which are used by females and males. The right side (in white) shows the one used by females, with the SFPs at the bottom (e.g. *wane*, *noyone*, *kashira*) being the strongly feminine ones, whilst the left side (in grey) shows the one used by males, with the ones at the top (e.g. *kaa*, *ze*, *tara*)

being the strongly masculine ones.

Table 2.6. Chart by Ide and Yoshida (1999, 464); itself taken from Ide (1979, 8-9).

| → The proportion of use by male speakers | | ← The proportion of use by female speakers | |
|--|--|--|---------|
| kaa | | | |
| yona | | | |
| yonaa | | | |
| ze | | | |
| monna | | | |
| monnaa | | | |
| tara | | | |
| zo | | 94.4% | |
| naa ↗* | | 94.1% | |
| na | | 90.2% | |
| saa | | 86.2% | |
| ka | | 84.0% | |
| wakeyo | | 83.3% | |
| ke | | 79.2% | |
| yo | 66.5% | | |
| kanaa | 64.3% | | |
| mon | 59.0% | | |
| yoo | 52.4% | | |
| kedo | 51.9% | | |
| yone | 50.0% | 50.0% | yone |
| | | 51.8% | ne |
| | | 52.3% | sa |
| | | 53.3% | kana |
| | | 54.5% | wake |
| | | 58.3% | nano ↗ |
| | | 60.0% | yuuka |
| | | 62.7% | toka |
| | | 62.8% | no |
| | | 63.2% | yoo |
| | | 72.5% | no ↗ |
| | 77.8% | | monne |
| | 77.8% | | none |
| | 85.7% | | nano |
| | 88.9% | | wa |
| | 92.3% | | naa ↘** |
| | 97.2% | | noyo |
| | | | wane |
| | | | noyone |
| | | | kashira |
| | | | nanone |
| | | | wayo |
| 100% | The proportion of use by female speakers | | |

Key: *↗ indicates rising tone **↘ indicates falling tone

Figure 16.6 Frequency of the use of sentence-final particles according to the gender of the speakers

Source: Ide 1979: 8-9

2.6. *Yakuwarigo* and gender

Yakuwarigo, or “role language” in Japanese, was first proposed as an area of study in 2001 by Kinsui Satoshi, a sociolinguist and professor based at Osaka University. Kinsui explains that *yakuwarigo* is “a set of spoken language features (such as vocabulary, grammar and phonetic characteristics) that can be psychologically associated with a particular character type. (Character's attributes include age, gender, occupation, social status, appearance and personality.)” (Kinsui and Yamakido 2015, 30). *Yakuwarigo* is something that can be analysed “in fiction, popular culture, e.g., manga, anime, and beyond (the internet)” (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 37). As can be expected, the study of role language can be applied to anime, as “*yakuwarigo* is rampant in popular anime shows, as most of the characters are depicted in purposefully exaggerated manners. Roles such as protagonist, villain, sidekick, etc. are made transparent to the audience both visually and linguistically in mainstream anime” (Hiramoto 2013, 52). It is important, then, to examine the way a character speaks and how this might represent specific ideals of Japanese linguistic hegemony. Hence, Kinsui's *yakuwarigo* is singularly pertinent for this study, as the film *Perfect Blue*, and all its features outlined previously (section 2.3.4., 2.6.2.), as well as anime (section 2.6.1), are part of a scripted speech.

Research in *yakuwarigo* is varied, as there is a wealth of material to examine; Teshigawara and Kinsui (2011) provide an overview of what has been investigated. The authors explain that research in *yakuwarigo* includes, for instance, critical perspectives on novels as a source of *yakuwarigo* and not a reflection of the actual language (ibid 43), which may result in the re-examination of historical fiction. This can be observed in the work by Takeyama (2007, in Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 43), who analyses the passages of “learnt

men” written by Murasaki Shikibu—a woman and the author of the novel *Genji Monogatari*—as *yakuwarigo*. Takeyama (2007) explains that the language of the novel is an artificial one and should not be taken as an example of how people actually spoke at the time.

Another type of *yakuwarigo* that has been studied is that of “elderly male language in Japanese manga” (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011 44), as well as the “*aruyo* language, often associated with Chinese people” (ibid 46). An additional area of much research in *yakuwarigo* has also been that of dialects. For example, Kinsui (2003) examines how the portrayal of people who speak in the Ōsaka dialect has changed over the years in literature and the mass media (Teshigawara and Kinsui 2011, 47). Inoue (2003) studies the translation of dialects and *yakuwarigo* in the novel *Gone with the Wind*, and discovers that in the translation the white characters employ standard grammatical forms, whilst the black characters have ungrammatical speech.

Finally, an area that has been explored in *yakuwarigo* is that of the role of gender in Japanese language. Nakamura Momoko is one of the main scholars who has studied the relationship between *yakuwarigo* and gender, studying not only the genealogy of male and female language in Japan (2014), but also the use of *yakuwarigo* in anime, specifically the use of SFPs by both men and women (2007, 2012) and the ones heroines in anime use (2013). Nakamura concentrates on the relationship between *yakuwarigo* and the “powers that be”, e.g. *yakuwarigo* in relation to how it can be used by the government to foment a “national male language” (2014), or the specific use of a female language by high school girls who are denied the use of a male language (2004).

As I have outlined in the previous paragraphs, “a number of recent studies in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics recognize scripted speech as a site of stereotyping (e.g., Ronkin & Karn 1999; Inoue 2003; Meek 2006; Queen 2004)” (Hiramoto 2013, 51). Of the previous studies, Inoue is the only Japanese one mentioned; yet indeed Japan is not the only place where scripted speech is a source of stereotyping. Ronkin and Karn (1999) deal with the use of “Mock Ebonics” in Oakland, California; Queen (2004) examines how African-American dialects have been dubbed into German equivalents; and Meek (2006) concentrates on the stereotypical representations of Injun Indians in white public spaces.

In the case of anime, this means that female characters will speak in a feminine manner, and male characters in a masculine manner, at least most of the time. The stereotypical performance and script of anime has become so standard that fans can expect to hear the same speech style all the time, as “Through their speech styles, characters in scripted speech are commonly made identifiable with subgroups to which they belong according to certain expectations based on linguistic ideology (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status, regional affiliation, etc.)” (Hiramoto 2013, 52). When watching an anime, a listener or viewer would be able to discern whether a character is male or female, whether that character belongs to a specific social class, or even what job that character has by listening to them and analysing specific linguistic characteristics such as 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs.

Yakuwarigo, even if studied amply by sociolinguists such as those mentioned in the previous paragraphs, has barely been considered in translation studies. Hiramoto (2013) is the only previous study regarding the stereotypical manner in which female characters are portrayed in anime and how they are translated. She studies how the characters of the series

Cowboy Bebop (1998, DIR Shinichirō Watanabe) are designed and portrayed in a way that “the artwork and language use reflect heterosexuality by emphasising the masculinity or femininity of the characters” (2013, 74). Hiramoto (ibid) studies the use of 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs, and discovers that the characters speak in Japanese and English in a manner that promotes and reflects a hegemonic heterosexual ideology by emphasising the masculinity or femininity of the characters (ibid).

The next section, then, exemplifies the clichéd language used in anime by male and female characters, with the samples concentrating on female characters.

2.6.1. Examples of the “clichéd” feminine language used in anime

Anime characters speak in a specific manner depending on a show’s or film’s genre, as well as on the character’s own gender. These characters employ a specific *yakuwarigo*, i.e. a specific manner of speaking according to their roles and gender. This *yakuwarigo* can be “a site of stereotyping” (Hiramoto 2013, 51). This section provides a series of examples of the “clichéd” manner in which female characters speak.

In anime female characters frequently use the request form *-nasai* that women in Japan are expected to use (Tanaka 2004, 28), instead of the *-te* imperative form which is the one only used by men (ibid). However, in anime the use of *-nasai* and *-te* relates more to whether a female character has a strong temperament or if she is angry or agitated, i.e. if she is in an “altered state”, e.g. Jo in episode 9 of the *Little Women* (1988) anime adaptation when she says “*Basa wo tomete chyoudai!*” (“Stop the carriage!”) when she angrily tells another character to stop the carriage; or the Jeanne D’Arc character in episode 3 of the anime series *Drifters* (2016), when she says: *Moette! Moette!* (“Burn! Burn!”) when she exclaims that she

literally wants to incinerate her enemies. Another example is Mima herself in one of the first scenes of *Perfect Blue* (this sample is analysed in section 4.1.3.).

Female characters in anime also use very specific SFPs. An example of a recent anime would be the high school music club adventure *Hibike! Euphonium* (2013), where in episode 5, in discussing their roles and the instruments they play in a high school band, one of the characters uses the *atashi* (a moderately-feminine 1PP) in “*Konkai atashitachi joshin ja maite areba*” (“This time the girls the girls can’t wait to roll) , and *no* (a moderately feminine SFP) in “*Donna teruno?*” (“How can we do it?”) and “*Aah, Midori mo konbasu mote konshikattano...*” (“Ah, now Midori has bought the water”).

In *Drifters*, the character named “Easy” in episode 4 of *Drifters* (2016) uses highly-feminine SFPs in: “*Watashi no Endstachi toku wo yobanaiwa*” (“I will not call my Ends”), and “*Tatakai ni katsu no ha watashinano*” (“I’m the one who will fight”). In this case she is addressing one of the other major characters of the show and her main enemy, so this could be taken as an example of her using specific feminine SFPs in order to be in equal power as her enemy, just like Abe (1998) explains.

In the show *Fuuka* (2017), the dialogue at the beginning of episode 2 between Fuuka (a teenage girl) and her big sister (a young adult), when they are talking about Fuuka’s future as a pop star, is full of moderately-feminine and highly-feminine SFPs, and interestingly, the one interjection by a male character, Fuuka’s big brother Yamato, has a strongly-masculine SFP, as seen in the following extract:

Fuuka: “*Dene, eiga no Koyukichan no uta mo sugokku yokattano!*” (“Yeah, and Koyuki’s singing in the movie was so amazing!”)

Big Sister: “*Demo Fuuka, benkyō wa chantō yatteruno*” (“But Fuuka, are you keeping with your studies?”)

F: “*Soyeba, watashi mada riku job kanyanseruno*” (“By the way, I’ve been asked to join the track team again”)

BS: “*Ara, sonnano?*” (“Oh, really?”)

F: “*Harukinainoni*” (“I don’t even want to join”)

F: “*Uun, Demo nanika aru ki ga suruno*” (“But I feel there must be something”)

BS: “*Aseru kotonaiwa*” (“There’s no need to rush”)

Yamato: “*Iisa*” (That’s fine)

This particular case abounds with feminine SFPs, and is in accordance to the type of *shōnen* show this is, one in which the panties of Fuuka, a slim teenage girl, are frequently shown. Hence, her sexualisation in a graphic manner relates to how feminine her language is.

In the teenage romance series *Tsuki ga Kirei*, in episode 11 Kotarō’s (the main character, a teenage boy) mother (a housewife) is talking to him and uses a very feminine SFPs in “*Wakatteruno?*” (“Do you understand?”), “*Hazukashikatawayo!*” (“It was embarrassing!”), and uses the female request form “*Okinasai*” (“Wake up”). In the same episode, Hina and her sister Akane have a conversation with SFPs ranging from the slightly feminine to a moderately one in “*Kimochi wo wakaru kedo sa...*” (“I understand your feelings, but...”) and “*Okorenaino*” (“Don’t get angry!”). Interestingly, Hina (the older sister) uses a less-feminine language with *-sa* than her younger sister Akane does with *-no*. Finally, in another scene Kotaro, a teenage boy, uses the highly-masculine 1PP *ore* when talking to his girlfriend (Akane) in “*Jaa, tsugi ore*” (“Ok, I’m next”). He later says “*Haha oya ga hantai shiteru kara, seishiki agete mikaishite yaritai dakedosa*” (“Mother is against it because

it was so sudden”). In both sentences he uses a strongly masculine language.

Finally, as Abe (1998) explains, certain Japanese women in a position of power can use strongly-feminine SFPs. This can happen in anime as well, albeit rarely. For example, Kusanagi Motoko, “the major” and leader of the intelligence department Section 9 in the futuristic, cyber-punk series *Kōkaku Kidōtai: Stand Alone Complex* (*Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex*, 2002; DIR Kamiyama Kenji), talks to Togusa, one of her subordinates (who is a man), and says the following:

Major: “*It wa. Suki ni shinasai*” (“That’s fine then. You can do what you want”)

Togusa: “*Arigatou gozaimasu!*” (“Thank you very much!”)

In this sample Motoko uses the highly-feminine SFP *-wa*, as well as the request form *-nasai*. Motoko is in a position of power and could have used a more neutral SFP, as well as an imperative form instead of the request form. Nonetheless, the roles in Section 9 are clear: Motoko is Togusa’s superior, so she can speak in a feminine manner without this actually meaning or implying in any way that she is in an inferior position to her male subordinate.

This is but a small sample of the way female characters speak in anime, and writing a more exhaustive list goes beyond the scope of this thesis. However, in writing this section I would like to encourage people to pay more attention at the relation between how female characters speak, and how they are characterised and graphically presented on screen. The next section explains how the characters in *Perfect Blue*, especially Mima, speak in a vastly different manner than the usual female anime protagonist.

2.6.2. Gender-specific language in *Perfect Blue*

In this section I will discuss the gender-specific language that Kon's characters—specifically, the fans, Tadokoro, Rumi, Me-Mania, Phantom Mima and especially Mima—use in *Perfect Blue*. This is important to explore in order to see to what extent Kon's critique of gender practices/roles in the Japanese “*idol*” industry is reflected in the language assigned to these characters by the scriptwriters.

- Mima: Mima is an unusual case in anime, as she is a female character who speaks in a neutral manner, i.e. she seldom uses feminine forms. This may be due to the fact that her behaviour—her individuality and resistance to society's norms—is atypical for female characters in anime and that the scriptwriters wanted to reflect that not only in the film's plot but also in the way Mima speaks, i.e. in her specific *yakuwarigo*.

One example of this is that she uses the 1PP “*Watashi*” (I/me) during the entire film, e.g. “*Kore ha **watashi** janai!*” (“This is not me!”), “***Watashi** ha honmono dayo*” (“I am real”). Only very early does she use the more feminine forms “*atashi/atakushi*”, specifically in “***Atashi** ga Mima yo!*” (I am Mima!). She does, however, use more feminine SFPs, such as *yo*, which are nonetheless also used by men in Japan. When Mima speaks with Phantom Mima (her illusion) she uses the standard *anata* instead of the more informal *kimi*,⁷⁹ for example. The reason for this is perhaps that Mima sees Phantom Mima as a threat and that by using a standard form, instead of a more familiar one, she can exert some distance between herself and Phantom Mima whilst she attempts to survive. Mima's language is a form of defence against Phantom Mima, i.e. herself.

⁷⁹ *Anata* and *kimi* mean “you”, but the first one is polite, and the second one is plain or informal.

- Phantom Mima: Mima's alter ego, an illusion, speaks in a more feminine manner than Mima does. This seems reasonable, as which Phantom Mima is a reflection of a Mima who never stopped being an *idol*. For instance, Phantom Mima says “*Yogoreta aidoru nante daremo suki ni na nai yone*” (“Nobody likes a tarnished *idol*!”). In this case, *yo ne* are two feminine SFPs, the translation of which is discussed in detail in the analysis and discussion sections.

- Mima's managers: When Mima's managers, Tadokoro (a man) and Rumi (a woman) discuss what to do about Mima's future, Tadokoro initially speaks in a soft manner with the use of feminine SFPs like *dayou*. But as the discussion progresses and Tadokoro becomes more frustrated with Rumi because of their argument, he uses the more masculine forms of the verb *desu*, such as *darou* and *dazou*. Rumi, in response, however, uses a standard form of the language with the SFP *-ka* in “*desuka?*” This indicates that as a woman she positions herself in a lower social rank than Tadokoro, a man (as Tadokoro can use highly informal forms of verbs, whilst Rumi must use formal forms of the verbs). The role-relationship is one of colleagues in an informal context. However, when Tadokoro needs to convince Rumi of his perspective or impose himself, he speaks in a more powerful manner by using the stronger, masculine form of verbs. What can be observed here, then, is that although Tadokoro and Rumi have the same social rank as Mima's managers, Rumi inhabits a lower position because she is a woman and must show reverence to Tadokoro, which is shown in their speech.

In a different scene, when Rumi is explaining the Internet to Mima, Rumi uses very feminine SFPs like *-yoo* and *-nano*, especially the latter. She speaks and acts in a highly stereotypical feminine manner. Towards the end of the movie, when she is trying to kill

Mima and says “*Mima ha futari mou iranain damon*” (“We don’t need two Mimas now!”) she uses the highly-feminine SFP *damon*. In other words, as Rumi progressively loses her mind, she becomes more feminine in her attitudes and the way she speaks; she is reverting to the *idol* that Mima (and Rumi herself) once was. This does not mean that “madness” is expressed through an overly feminised language, but that when a deranged Rumi reverted to an *idol* demeanour she employed the feminine language frequently used by *idols*.

- The Fans: At the beginning of the film, the *wota* employ the informal verb “to be” *dayo*. This informality is a characteristic of the way the fans domain, i.e. they are all male, talking about *idols*, outside of the concert’s venue. In another scene, however, where the fans are talking sarcastically about Mima’s acting, they use the highly-masculine SFP *-na*, perhaps to use a strong language to dismiss her not only through the content of what they are saying, but also by means of how they say it. There are only a couple of instances in which the fans speak; most of the scenes revolve around them as an audience, or concentrating on Mima’s biggest fan, Me-Mania (who himself only speaks in one scene).

- Me-Mania: Me-Mania’s few utterances are said in a highly-masculine manner. When he is assaulting Mima, he says “*Boku no daijina Mima-rin wo mamorunnda!*” using a moderately-masculine form of “I”, *boku*, and an informal yet not explicitly masculine SFP *-nda*. Me-Mania utters a pejorative 2PP *omae* towards Mima, acting in a denigratory, and violent manner towards her, degrading her not only through his actions—his attempted rape—but also through the specific language he uses. As I explain in detail in the analysis, this is a way for Me-Mania to exert his power over Mima.

2.7. To summarise

The area of gender is one in which Kon's *Perfect Blue* differs from most other anime.

1. Kon is relentless in his criticism of Japanese society. Specifically, in *Perfect Blue* he criticises society's and men's objectification—through the male gaze—and consumption of women, specifically *idols*.
2. Kon's films concentrate almost exclusively on strong, independent female characters in different roles than the usual ones in anime. In this, his work is unlike most anime that displays female characters in a subservient position towards men.
3. Linguistically speaking, the secondary characters of *Perfect Blue* tend to adhere to the standard gender norms of the Japanese language. However, Mima, the main character, is an exception. She chooses a standard form of Japanese, using 1PPs (like *watashi* and *anata*), whilst only occasionally employing feminine forms such as the 1PP *Atashi* and the SFPs *-yo*. This indicates that the scriptwriters wanted Mima to have a strong character and that that should be reflected her through her use of a standard language, instead of a feminine one. Hence, the area of *yakuwarigo* can be explored in this thesis and many more studies.

Given the importance of gender portrayals in both image and language in anime, Kon's approach is striking. My project is to study and describe the translation from Japanese to US English of this example of his work in order to see how and to what extent Mima's linguistic subversion, which is important to her role as a renegade *idol*, is carried over into English. This project is only the second to address the question of gender in anime translation, in particular a work with unconventional portrayals of female characters.

Considering the importance of anime as a pop phenomenon worldwide, and the role played by audiovisual products as a “main vehicle of transmitting information, culture and ideology” (Chaume-Varela 2004, 7), a critical look at how this often highly sexualised material travels into other languages and cultures is an important step.

My particular project consists in describing and critically analysing the manner in which gender is portrayed in the script of *Perfect Blue* in the “original” Japanese release, and how this portrayal is translated in the official subtitles and dubbing into US English. Hence, as mentioned in the introduction, the research questions for this project are:

1. How is gender portrayed in the language of the anime film *Perfect Blue*, and in its translations into English via the official subtitles and official dubbing?
2. How do these methods of translation differ in regard to gender portrayals?

Chapter III:

Audiovisual Translation

3.0. Audiovisual Translation

“Every film is a foreign film, foreign to some audience somewhere—
and not simply in terms of language”.

- Atom Egoyan and Ian Balfour⁸⁰

Yves Gambier, one of the foremost scholars of audiovisual translation, explains that this area of study is “mainly concerned with the transfer of multimodal and multimedia speech (dialogue, monologue, comments, etc.) into another language/culture” (Gambier 2013, 45). AVT, then, is not only concerned with the “textual”, linguistic transfer (i.e. the words per se), but also with the non-verbal signs, such as sounds, and what occurs when the verbal and the non-verbal interact; this is what intermodality refers to. Jorge Díaz-Cintas, who has extensively published on matters concerning AVT—but especially regarding subtitling and manipulation— claims that “an audiovisual text is a mode of communication that is distinct from the written and the oral modes, although it may not be easy to draw a clear borderline between the audiovisual and other modes” (2008, 29). This borderline is evasive because an audiovisual text is a mode of its own, at the same time a combination of the written and the oral modes, which have existed for millennia, and which include the use of images. As Henrik Gottlieb explains, an audiovisual product (or text) is a “polysemiotic

⁸⁰ ---, eds. *Subtitles: on the Foreignness of Film*. Boston: MIT Press, 2004. Print.

system, capable of transmitting a myriad of meanings and information through the image, sound and linguistic dimensions” (2001, 185).⁸¹

Frederic Chaume-Varela, professor at Universitat Jaume I in Spain who concentrates mostly on “quality standards in dubbing”, explains that since “starting the 21st century, we live in a society dominated, influenced and even directed by audiovisual media. Audiovisual media have become the main vehicle for the transmission of information, culture and ideology” (Chaume-Varela 2004, 7; my translation⁸²). This transmission occurs in many ways, which include films, TV shows, anime, YouTube videos, news, and so on. Since this media is transnational, the analysis of its translation(s) is important. Indeed, AVT is growing in scope day by day “as advertising translation, comics translation and videogame localisation have joined this large set of audiovisual transfer modes and have been incorporated into the multimedia translation world” (Chaume-Varela 2012, 3). AVT over the years has obtained increased recognition, and today is a major area of research in translation studies. AVT was originally considered a form of literary translation, but quickly developed as its own field. The same is happening now with video game translation: originally it was considered a part of AVT, but is now a field of its own.

AVT continues to evolve not only with technology—which is now much more available to the average person—but also with people’s tastes and needs, as audiences wish to understand other texts. Even “since the early days of the cinema, in order to make these audiovisual programmes comprehensible to audiences unfamiliar with the language of the

⁸¹ Professor at the University of Copenhagen, a researcher in AVT.

⁸² “*Iniciando el siglo XXI, vivimos inmersos en un tipo de sociedad dominada, influida e incluso dirigida por los medios audiovisuales. Los medios audiovisuales se han convertido en el vehículo principal de transmisión de información, de cultura y de ideología*”.

original, different forms of language transfer on the screen have been required” (Díaz-Cintas and Anderman 2009, 4). In order to make these “audiovisual programmes” (or texts, or products) available to “those unfamiliar with the language of the original” (ibid), two, basic different approaches exist, and these are the topics of the following sections: subtitling (which involves keeping the original soundtrack, but adding a written-word translation on screen), and dubbing (which involves replacing the speech soundtrack with a new soundtrack in the target language). In the coming pages I will explain subtitling and dubbing.

3.1. Subtitling

This section explains subtitling, analysing first the technical aspects around it, and then analysing the “intermodality” found in subtitling. The next section deals with Markus Nornes’ theories of subtitling.

Before subtitling existed in its current form, during the time of the silent film, “intertitles or title cards were its oldest relatives” (Díaz-Cintas and Remael 2006, 26). Intertitles were the printed titles edited/inserted into the middle of a film, used to convey a dialogue or monologue uttered by characters or an explanation of what was happening on the screen. Intertitles were used before the advent of sound in cinema in 1927. Chaume-Varela explains that these intertitles, which were used to “help explain the plot and communicate in a better manner the information of the audiovisual text, are what caused the initial interest, from a theoretical point of view, in the study of the translation of these texts” (2004, 41). Since intertitles were the first written form to appear on any audiovisual material they needed to be translated so that the audience of a different country could understand key parts of the plot. The same concept applies to subtitles.

Chaume-Varela (2004, 44) explains that the “first subtitled films in Europe with intralinguistic intertitles were the silent films *Mireille* (1922) and *Judex* (1916), in which the lower part of the frame was reduced so that the dialogues’ subtitles could fit.” Although Ivarsson (2002) states that *College Chums* already had subtitles, Díaz-Cintas (2001) points out that subtitling was first done in the US in 1908 (Chaume-Varela *ibid*). Subtitling, to be precise, “consists in keeping the original soundtrack, and adding a written word translation to the screen. Subtitling is much cheaper and quicker than dubbing or voice over” (Chaume-Varela 2012, 5). The purpose of subtitling is, first and foremost, to make the verbal utterances of a film understandable to—usually—a foreign audience.

3.1.1. Technical aspects of subtitling

Subtitles are produced in what is called “synchrony”, a condition in which there is “agreement between signals emitted for the purpose of communicating the same message” (Mayoral et al. 1988, 359). This means that the image and the subtitles are expected to be synchronised and to appear at the same time so that they fit, and enhance each other. Subtitling needs to adapt to spatial synchrony, ergo the message must be delivered on the screen within its limits. Because of this, “the physical delivery of the written message is impinged upon by the width of the screen that usually only allows a total of 35 characters per line in a maximum of two lines” (Díaz-Cintas 1999, 33). The amount of space that a subtitle has on screen, “should not exceed two lines, of between 28 and 40 characters each, depending on the medium in which the audiovisual text will be exhibited” (Chaume-Varela

2004, 99; my translation⁸³). One of the many challenges of subtitling, then, lies in the fact that the tone of a character's language or of a scene must be reflected in the subtitles, with the physical constraint that this must be done with a maximum of 35 characters in two lines.

As Titford explains, “the problems encountered in subtitling derive essentially from the *constraints* imposed on the translator by the medium itself” (1982, 113). This means that much of the dialogue must be “condensed”, and this can be up to 20-40% of the dialogue (Lomheim 1999, 191, in Gottlieb 2004, 87). One of the issues regarding condensation is that through the uniformity that results from condensation, specific, colourful nuances of a character or scene, or even a film itself, may be lost, as “‘condensation’ and synthesis of dialogue, has been shown to compromise the interpersonal pragmatics of subtitled dialogue” (Pérez-González 2014, 16).

The technical complexities around subtitling are very diverse, dealing with aspects not only related to the act of verbal translation itself, but also concerning, for example, the timing in which the subtitles appear, and even the format in which the subtitled video is in. The subtitler also needs to adapt to the rules and contracts that vary from company to company, an integral part of their work.

3.1.2. Subtitling and intermodality

Subtitles, however, are not alone on the screen. Gottlieb (1997, 95) posits that subtitling “is a form of ‘diasemiotic’ or ‘intermodal’ form of audiovisual translation” (Gottlieb 1997, 95) involving the shift from a spoken to a written medium,

⁸³ “*Un subtítulo no puede exceder las dos líneas, de entre 28 y 40 caracteres cada una, según el medio en que se exhibirá el texto audiovisual*”.

occurring at the same time as other modes, e.g. the audio and the image. Patrick Zabalbeascoa-Terrán, a prominent AVT scholar, explains that “the verbal signs combine in various ways with the sounds and images of a film, creating different patterns of intertextuality and other features of textual structure and meaning” (2008, 22). Even if at first it may seem that the subtitles are the only verbal signs providing a meaning, the other channels (e.g. images and sounds) are supplying meaning as well. Pérez-González (2014) talks about how, based on Stöckl’s (2004) work, “the visual and auditory semiotic resources required to create and interpret audiovisual texts can be grouped under four core modes: Sound, Music, Image and Language” (2014, 192). He further explains how these modes, along with the subtitles actually transmit meaning.

For example, Pérez-González discusses about how in the Dutch film *Alles is Liefde* (2007, DIR Joram Lüsner) there are many heavily culture-laden elements (e.g. the oranges transported from Spain to The Netherlands, the Dutch Santa Claus—*Sinterklaas*—, the painting of people’s faces for the festivity, etc.). Yet “the multimodal configuration of meaning in the film amounts to a unique **dischrony** [lack of match] between the information expressed through the verbal mode and the message conveyed through the images: culture-specific symbolic information is encoded exclusively in the visuals [bold in the original]” (ibid 188). Pérez-González argues that the culture-specific connotations of the film might be lost to the viewers who, in the case of *Alles is Liefde*, might not be familiar with the festivity of *Sinterklaas*; a subtitled version that only concentrates on the translation of the Dutch dialogue “would not help foreign viewers overcome their inability to grasp the contribution of visual semiotics to the overall meaning of this film” (ibid 190). He concludes that transmitting the meaning found in the visual code is difficult, and would require extra

subtitles, or a narratorial voice-over track (ibid 190).

This takes us back to the decades-old issue of pondering on how much the translator should intervene in a text (the text, in this case, being a film). It might perhaps be better to let the viewers try to analyse things by themselves or to add a commentary (as a voice-over or with subtitles, which many films include in the “Director’s commentary” of a release) as an option. In many cases, though, the cultural issues Pérez-González (ibid 190) raises are not really addressed in the film’s commentaries.

Subtitling, then, is a form of translation that encompasses a series of challenges. It is not merely a textual translation, but also needs to take into account the physical constraints of the medium. It needs to be synchronised with dialogues, but at the same time must provide a succinct version of what is spoken as well as the plethora of multimodal (e.g. sound, music, image, language) meanings, and culture-specific connotations within the film (Pérez-González 2014, 190). The next section deals with Markus Nornes’ innovative subtitling theories: “sensible” and “sensuous” subtitling.

3.1.3. Sensible and sensuous subtitling

There is much discussion about how a subtitler should work, which leads me to film scholar Markus Nornes’ theories of “sensible” and “sensuous” subtitling (theories he formerly labelled “corrupt” and “abusive” in his article “For an Abusive Subtitling” published in 1999).⁸⁴ This section first deals with the terms “corrupt” and “abusive”, and later with “sensible” and “sensuous” subtitling. In his 1999 essay, Nornes, a film-scholar who has

⁸⁴ “For An Abusive Subtitling”. *Film Quarterly*, 52.3 (1999): 17-34.

written books and articles on Japanese films, and subtitling,⁸⁵ says that film translation can be a “corrupt” act (Nornes 1999, 19). For Nornes, a “corrupt subtitling” is one that appropriates the source text and conforms it to the rules, regulations and idioms of the target language and culture (ibid 18). Corrupt subtitling is a form of “domesticating translation” that pretends to bring the audience to “an experience of the foreign” (ibid 18). Whilst most subtitlers say they promote learning and facilitate enjoyable meetings with other cultures, Nornes would deem that this is not necessarily the case because, in his view, they are actually conspiring to hide their repeated acts of violence through codified rules and a tradition of suppression. It is this practice that is corrupt, though it feigns completeness in its own violent world (ibid 18). “Corrupt” subtitling is a form of subtitling that removes all trace of the original’s flavour, smell and sensitivities in order for it to be “suitable” for release into a specific target market.

“Abusive subtitling”, on the contrary, is a type of subtitling that revels in the “violence” of the subtitle and language experimentation (Nornes 1999, 18). This is a type of subtitling that is more creative in nature, with manipulation involved in order to “critique the imperial politics that ground corrupt practices while ultimately leading the viewer to the foreign original being reproduced in the darkness of the theater” (Nornes 1999, 18). This type of subtitling seeks to bring the *viewer* into the foreignness of the film, to make the viewer uncomfortable about what he/she is watching so that he/she reflects on what is happening on screen; it allows the subtitler to be “freer” in his job, allowing for a more creative output.

In a recent talk at Rikkyo University, in Tokyo, Japan, Nornes apologised for the “aggressive vocabulary” of his 1999 article, and his use of the term “abusive” (2015). He

⁸⁵ Including “Japanese Documentary Film: The Meiji Era Through Hiroshima” (2003), and “The Pink Book: Japanese Eroduction and Its Contexts” (2014).

explained that he now prefers the term “sensible” instead of “corrupt”, referring to an industry-bound, but uncreative subtitling; and “sensuous”, instead of “abusive” subtitling, as the latter was aggressive and did not convey a “love for cinema” (ibid). Sensuous subtitling, instead:

puts the spectator in touch with the foreign film, with otherness. With the materiality of language, and in the end with the sights and sounds of the cinematic object. Close attention to rhyme, rhythm, force, speech, alliteration, grain of the voice or even silence. The sensuous translator feels a responsibility mainly to the screen writer, and the culture from which he writes (ibid).

The previous statement shows Nornes’ passion and love for cinema. He explains that subtitlers should pay attention to not only sound-related aspects (e.g. force, rhyme, rhythm), but also to the “silence”, which for him can be broken when a subtitle remains on the screen, whilst no one is speaking (ibid). The following charts summarise Nornes’ theories of subtitling:

Table 3.0. Sensible and sensuous subtitling (Nornes 2015, np).

| Corrupt Subtitling → Sensible Subtitling |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent subtitles are not inherently corrupt. For unmarked, unremarkable speech they are appropriate. • There is a dynamic between stricture (industry, media, censorship, ideology) and creativity (of the translator) • But sensible subtitlers fall obediently on the side of stricture. |
| Common sense, rule-bound, privileging semantic meaning, technical, normative strategic |

| Abusive Subtitling → Sensuous Subtitling |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention to rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, the grain of the voice, even silence. • Visually inviting, even haptic, when called for by the film (probably rare). • Sensuous subtitling involves a stance towards language and the foreign that puts the foreign and the art of cinema before industrial needs and rules that protect them. |
| Material, ecstatic, haptic, sensitive, bends rules, tactical |

Nornes' theories of subtitling address many of the more "colourful" aspects of the practice. He concentrates not only on the verbal issues in subtitling, but also on how the subtitles can stimulate specific senses such as touch or smell, and how even the silence in a film is important and should not be interrupted by subtitles (Nornes 2015, np). Nornes' theories of subtitling have not been widely addressed in TS, possibly because he is a Film-Studies scholar; however, his theories seem to be gaining ground, as they are mentioned several times in Luis Pérez-González' book *Audiovisual Translation: Theories, Methods and Issues*.

3.2. Dubbing

A man plucked a nightingale and, finding but little to eat, said:

“You are just a voice and nothing more”.

- Plutarch⁸⁶

Michel Chion, the foremost scholar on the use of sound in film, explains that “the birth of the ‘talkies’ (the first films that included synchronised sound with the images) happened in 1927 with Warner Brother’s *The Jazz Singer*” (1999, 7). Before that, Chion explains, films were simply known as *films*, yet with the advent of sound in cinema all the previous films before Alan Crosland’s *The Jazz Singer* became “mute” or “silent” films (ibid). The inclusion of sound allowed people to, for the first time, hear *silence*, something that had only happened before if the continuous musical accompaniment was interrupted (Chion 1999, 95). In Japan, this musical accompaniment was performed by the *benshi*, “the raconteurs (often more the stars and the draw of the movie than the movie itself) who accompanied movies with narration and dialogue” (Tansman 2004, 155), but who, with the advent of the talkies “breathed their dying breaths” (ibid).

Dubbing began to be developed in the 1930s, and “the main priority for the film industry was producing target language dialogue that would perfectly fit the actors’ lips, in what came to be known as voice ‘doubling’ and/or ‘ghosting’” (Ďurovičová 2003, in Pérez-González 2014, 22). Dubbing, to be precise, is a form of “oral reformulation” (Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010, 20), the replacement of the original script of an audiovisual product

⁸⁶ Moralia: Sayings of Spartans [Apophthegmata Laconia] 233a

(AVP) with a translated (“dubbed”) version of it. It is the “translation and adjustment of a script of an audiovisual text, and its subsequent interpretation by the dubbing director and the guide of the linguistic advisor, when the latter figure exists” (Chaume-Varela 2004, 32). Ávila, in his book about dubbing techniques, explains that dubbing is “the recording of a voice in synchrony with an actor’s lips or a determined reference that imitates as faithfully as possible the interpretation of the original voice. A dubbing’s function consists solely in carrying out a language change that would facilitate the comprehension of the audience the audiovisual product is aimed at” (2009, 18). Ávila’s technical description about dubbing is accurate, although he oversimplifies things when he says that the aim or function of a dubbed product is solely linguistic, as there are many socio-historical issues involved as well, which I will briefly address in the coming pages.

In 1999 Díaz-Cintas wrote that even if the equipment costs for dubbing and subtitling are comparable, the labour costs for dubbing are much higher (36). Today this is not the case, as not only are subtitling programmes accessible to anyone with a computer and Internet, but they are also free in many cases, such as with Aegisub.⁸⁷ They are now much cheaper than dubbing equipment. Dubbing, as can be expected, still remains considerably more expensive, since it involves a larger staff, and a longer process, than subtitling does. The following steps (based on Ávila 2009, 99-100) outline the many difficulties involved in translating the dubbing script alone: (1) A dubbing script must be created, adapted from the original one. The script is first translated from the original one, then (2) adjustments are made that correspond to the linguistic modifications and “specifics” (e.g. pauses). (3) An “assistant script” is then created; this script is a draft and has the dialogues divided in “takes”. (4) A

⁸⁷ <www.aegisub.org>.

“lectern (stand) script” is made for the actors so that they can read their script and make notes on it. (5) A director and sound technician(s) have their own script in which they can mark any comments or ideas they have, as well as which dialogues have already been spoken.

After these steps (or during the process of translating the script) there must be a casting for voice actors. This is a difficult process because sometimes it is extremely hard to find a voice suitable for the product’s characters.⁸⁸ After the casting is done, the recordings are carried out. This can require several takes per scene, leading to a long process (depending on the film’s budget), in which the dubbing director (a director who is usually not the film’s director) guides the voice actors through the dubbing process.

Nornes (2007, 192) explains that the quality of dubbing can be quite irregular, as it can be influenced by factors such as (1) the time invested in the production process; (2) the obtention of the best translators, directors, actors, technicians, studios and laboratories; (3) the amount of time set aside to perform the dubbing; (4) the revision of the translation by bilinguals; (5) the accessibility to the original film—or lack of thereof—; and (6) the number of takes demanded by the director before deciding that a specific performance is to his/her liking. Dubbing is a highly-technical endeavour, much more so than subtitling, and requires—if it is to be a good dubbing—many versions or takes, until the dubbing director is happy with the result. This long process is carried out because the a dubbed AVP is a product aimed at the *majority* of the population. In other words, it is meant to have a widespread

⁸⁸ For example, in the documentary film *In the Kingdom of Dreams and Madness* (2013, DIR Sunada Mami), about the creation of Miyazaki Hayao’s last film, *Kaze Tachi Nu*, several films are devoted to how Miyazaki has many problems finding a voice actor for the film’s main character. In an amusing shot Miyazaki is pondering which actor might be the best, and then realises that the perfect one is none other than his former student and famous anime director Anno Hideaki (noted for the *Evangelion* series).

reach and, hopefully, commercial success.

The function of a dubbed text, of course, changes depending on its aim. For example, in Japan a release is dubbed if it is aimed at children (e.g. with *Big Hero 6*, translated as *Beimax* in Japan), but it is subtitled for adults (e.g. *Interstellar*). As Nornes (2007, 36) explains,

the cost-effectiveness of a film's translation method is then directly proportional to the size of [its] potential audience, and this is why on a general basis European countries with a language spoken by a small population will tend to resort to subtitling (e.g. Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Greece and Portugal [sic]), whereas countries with large scale languages will implement dubbing (e.g. France, Germany, Italy and Spain).

To put it in simply, the larger the possible number of viewers for a release, the greater the likelihood that a film will be dubbed. Nornes refers to these “economies of scale: since dubbing is significantly more expensive, and the cost can vary greatly from country to country, e.g. five thousand dollars in Hungary, fifty-five thousand dollars in Italy, and millions in the USA” (Nornes 2007, 190).⁸⁹ The smaller the country, the smaller the budget it will have for dubbing (if any at all), and vice-versa. Nonetheless, Nornes' theories do not apply to every single country or market, as in Japan—the third largest economy in the world at the time of writing—subtitled films are more common.⁹⁰ The only films that are usually dubbed are the ones for children because it is difficult for them to read all the Kanji on screen.⁹¹ This makes it more common for releases aimed at older people to be subtitled.

To sum up, dubbing is a form of “oral reformulation” (Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010, 20), a “theatrical performance” carried out by voice actors that is more expensive to do

⁸⁹ “This scene is costing the studio thousands of dollars!” says an angry boss to a defiant, disobedient Daniel (Robin Williams) in the opening scene of *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993, DIR Chris Columbus, Chuck Jones).

⁹⁰ <<http://www.economist.com/topics/japanese-economy>>.

⁹¹ Chinese characters used in Japanese.

than subtitling. It is produced when a release is aimed at a large segment of the population, as it will be consumed by more people. This happens frequently in European countries like Spain (Chaume-Varela 2004, 32), where a large population can help cover the dubbing costs.

With the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis now explained, the next section deals with the linguistic and translation analysis of *Perfect Blue*.

Chapter IV:

Methodology and Analysis

4.0. Methodology

For the data analysis, I purchased the official DVD release by Manga Entertainment released in 1999. The DVD contains the film in Japanese, the English subtitles, the English dubbing, as well as some extras, and a pamphlet. The scenes I selected for analysis were chosen based on a criteria I established regarding the characters, their gender and whom they were addressing, i.e. their interactions. The scenes were selected if they were female-male (e.g. Tadokoro and Rumi), female-female (e.g. Rumi and Mima), and if Mima (the film's main character) was speaking to herself or with Phantom Mima. Controlling for these specific kinds of interactions helped produce a corpus that would provide answers to my research questions.⁹²

I first transcribed every single version of each scene, starting with the original Japanese text; then I transcribed the official English subtitles, followed by the official English dubbing on a dialogue-per-line basis. Finally, I analysed the gender and translation aspect of each scene focusing on how lexicogrammatical features were translated, specifically the 1PPs (First-Person Pronouns), 2PPs (Second-Person Pronouns), and SFPs (Sentence-Final Particles), just like in Hiramoto (2013).

⁹² My gratitude goes to Luise Juhnke, Mariana Sánchez Carranza and Nabey Zih Sánchez González for helping me transcribe the scenes.

4.1. Analyses of the Japanese text, the subtitles and the dubbing.

In this section I will explain how I performed my analysis of the subtitles and dubbing. Each scene is described in detail, followed by a transcription of the Japanese text, then the subtitles, and finally, the dubbing. I then organised the transcriptions and placed them in a table for quick reference. After the table I provided an analysis of each specific scene.

4.1.1. Scene 01: Men talking outside the show's venue



Fig.4.1. The fans outside the concert venue.

This scene takes place at the beginning of the movie. A few *Cham!* fans are having a conversation about the band outside a concert venue. The group is comprised of three men: a chubby fellow standing up, a slim one with glasses sitting down, and another slim man standing up. They are “geeking out,” that is, talking about the precious band memorabilia

they have each collected, past concerts, and gossip. In this case, the fans are not named, and I labeled them A, B and C, respectively.

Table 4.1. Japanese Romaji 01.

| Japanese <i>Romaji</i> |
|--|
| A 「A zettai takaitte sore」 |
| B 「Dakara Hiroshima no ibenton toki no datte」 |
| A 「A ore ikenakattayatsu?」 |
| C 「Rei-chinn ga soronotoki attikeino rentyuuno shidekashide utani tsumattesa 」 |
| B 「Sousou Mimirin ga kawarini utatterunowo wattishita MD dayo」 |
| C 「Mimirin no kichō na utadayo 」 |
| A 「A ne souieya anouwasatte honntounano?」 |

Table 4.2. Subtitles sample 01.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| A: Man, that's like way too expensive. |
| B: Like I said, it's from that show in Hiroshima. |
| A: The one I couldn't go to? |
| C: When Rei went fumbling her song 'coz those guys started trouble... |
| B: And this is the MiniDisc from when Mima sang in Rei's place. |
| C: It's a precious sample of Mimirin's singing voice! |
| A: Oh yeah, is that rumor true? |
| B: Oh, that? |

Table 4.3. Dubbing sample 01.

| Official Dubbing (01) |
|--|
| A: Maaan, that's like, way too expensive! |
| B: Mhm, like I said, it's from that show they performed in Hiroshima. |
| A: You mean the one I couldn't go to? |
| C: Yeah, that time when Rei fumbled one of her songs and then those guys started all that trouble? |
| B: And this is supposed to be the MiniDisc from when Mima had sung in Rei's place one time. |
| C: Yeah I hear it's a real collector's item. |
| A: Oh yeah, so like, is that rumour really true? |
| B: What, the one about Mima? |
| A: Uh-huh, that's what everyone's saying... |
| A+B+C: Hmmm... |

In the Japanese version, fan A uses a strongly-masculine 1PP, *ore*, but this is not reflected in any way in the translation. His overt masculinity is not reflected in any way in either the subtitles nor the dubbing. Fan B and C both use the SFP *dayou*, which is the informal form of the verb *desu* (to be), plus an emphatic *yo*. The pronoun and the SFPs denote the informal setting of the situation, and in the subtitles this is conveyed by the use of words such as “like,” “way” and “coz.” The Japanese dialogue utilises the word *kichō*, which means “valuable.” In this instance, the subtitles literally exaggerate the “value” element of the MiniDisk, converting it into a “precious sample.” This conveys a stronger sense of value than *kichō*, as well as playing up the level of worship the three fans have towards Mima. Hence, the fans objectification of Mima by saying that she is a “precious sample”, i.e. an object that can be possessed and exchanged, exists in both the Japanese version and the English subtitles.

The dubbing has a longer dialogue than the subtitles. The dubbing script allows for more text and flexibility in the translation. As a result, the dubbing keeps the informal style

used by the fans, in both the linguistic and phonetic sense. It keeps colloquial placeholders such as “like” and “mhm,” as well as longer sounds such as “maaaan”, making the language in the dubbing more informal than in the subtitles. The subtitle’s “precious sample” becomes a “real collector’s item”. Even if the noun changes, Mima’s objectification is present in the Japanese version, as well as in the subtitles and the dubbing.

4.1.2. Scene 02: Tadokoro and Rumi discuss Mima’s future



Fig.4.2. Rumi and Tadokoro discussing Mima’s future.

In this scene, Tadokoro, Rumi, and Mima have a discussion about Mima’s future. Mima has already said that she wants to end her career as an *idol* and become an actress, and Tadokoro agrees with her wishes. Rumi, however, disagrees and believes Mima should remain an *idol*, and she asks Mima about her “real” feelings.

Table 4.4 Japanese Romaji 02.

| <i>Japanese Romaji</i> |
|--|
| <p>Tadokoro (T) : 「Mima ha aidoru yori joyuu ni muite rundayo. Rendora no regyuraa ni doukatte iunnda. Konna iihanashi naidarouga 」 Rumi: 「uta tonokengyo datte iijyanaidesuka? 」 T 「hokano hutaritonosukejyuuru datte mou kamiattenaidarou 」 R 「Joyuu ni narutameni kibishii ressun wo ukete kitawake jya arimasen」 T 「kyokuno purodyuusaa ha joyuu no Mima wo zessann shitekuretenn dazo」 R 「datte Mima no kimochi ga?」</p> |

Table 4.5. Subtitles sample 02.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| <p>Tadokoro: They want her in a drama series. There are no better deals than this! Rumi: She can act AND sing! That should be all right! Tadokoro: Her schedule with the other two is already starting to mismatch! Rumi: She didn't go through those hard lessons to become an actress! Tadokoro: The TV producer praised Mima's acting! Rumi: But what about MIMA'S feelings!?</p> |

Table 4.6. Dubbing sample 02.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| <p>Tadokoro: Mima should be acting, not singing! [...] They want her in a drama series, you just don't pass on a deal like this! Rumi: She can do both, she can sing and act! Tadokoro: Her schedule with the other two has already created a difficult problem! Rumi: Listen, she didn't go to all those singing lessons just so she could become an actress! Tadokoro: The producer of the show doesn't care! He thinks Mima's a wonderful actress! Rumi: Of course! But what about Mima's feelings?</p> |

In the original Japanese version, Tadokoro initially uses a soft SFP *dayou* in his dialogue. But as the conversation progresses, he becomes increasingly exasperated with Rumi, and his demeanour intensifies. The result is that he begins to use a more masculine SFP, *-zo*.⁹³ He does this to appear masculine and forceful as he takes a stronger stance—in his demeanour and language—against Rumi.

In contrast, Rumi uses neither formal or informal language. Instead, she speaks in a neutral tone with SFPs, such as *desuka* and *arimasen*. This distinguishes her dialogue greatly from Tadokoro's overall tone in the conversation, which is informal. Rumi's neutral manner betrays no femininity in her dialogue. The fact that Rumi speaks with this tone is a sign that she is taking a stronger position for herself in the conversation by using neutral, de-feminized language. By doing so, she ceases to have a lower status than Tadokoro in the conversation.

This situation can be seen in the film's images. Tadokoro has a relaxed demeanour throughout the conversation, waving his hands as if to dismiss Rumi's statements. Rumi, however, looks directly at Tadokoro and places both of her hands on the table, fists closed, in order to project a powerful, angry attitude. Tadokoro is a man, so his style of conversation is that of a business discussion in a smoke-filled room or a bar. As a woman, Rumi must speak in a neutral manner and behave forcefully to get her point across to Tadokoro.

In the subtitles, Tadokoro is translated as speaking in an informal manner with short sentences, although he has more lines than Rumi. Every one of his sentences, with the exception of his first, ends with an exclamation sign. This allows the viewer to understand, along with the images, that at the moment he is speaking he is taking an assertive stance. However, the strong demeanour Tadokoro has in the Japanese version, with moderately-

⁹³. *Zo* is a stronger than *ze* as a propositional statement primarily used by men, according to McGloin (1991, 27).

masculine SFPs like *-darou*, and eventually the highly-masculine *-zo* is not portrayed in the subtitles. As a matter of fact, due to the use of capitalisation in Rumi's dialogue ("AND!"), Rumi's stance in saying that Mima should remain an *idol* is a stronger one than her more passive demeanour in the Japanese version.

The dubbing, just like in the subtitles, also shows a stronger demeanour of Rumi compared to the Japanese. Not only does the dubbing provide a more forceful portrayal of Rumi's behaviour, but the fact that dubbing is an oral medium allows for specific control of the character's voice. In this instance, the dubbing presents a strong tone that emphasises Rumi's. Rumi says "listen" before explaining to Tadokoro why she thinks Mima should stay an *idol*, even if she becomes an actress. Her delivery of this line emphasises her resolve: She says "listen," pauses and then rapidly lays out her argument. The first word serves to put Tadokoro on notice. Compared to the Japanese text, the dubbed Rumi is a more adamant one, even though Tadokoro's lines are longer, with more space to convey his message. He also has an "annoyed" tone of voice, but this does not emphasise his masculinity. In other words, in this particular case the subtitles and the dubbing do not emphasise Tadokoro's masculinity, but actually amplify Rumi's anger and demeanour at Tadokoro.

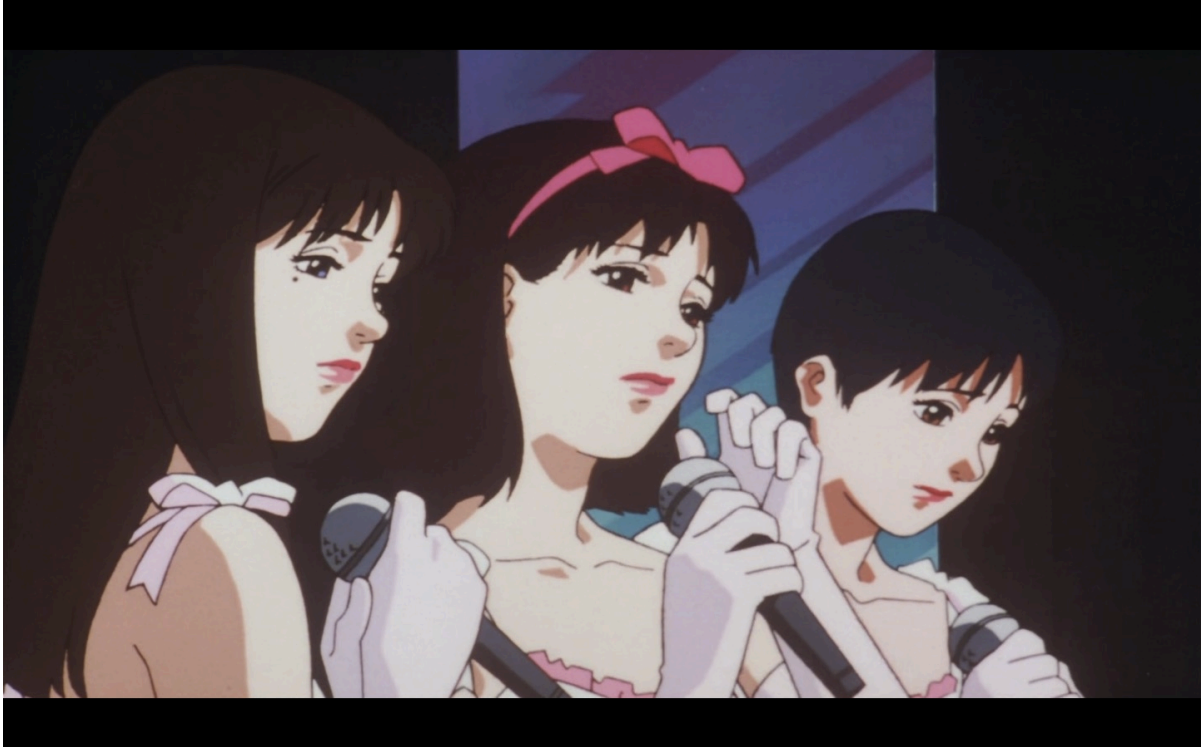
4.1.3. Scene 03: *Cham!* Departure

Fig.4.3. Mima says her farewell.

In this scene we see *Cham!* performing their final concert together as a trio. During a pause in the set, Mima addresses the audience and informs them that she is leaving the group—or “graduating” from it—as Yukiko puts it. But during this farewell address, a group of “punks” start to throw cans at the stage and begin fighting with each other. Mima, frustrated by their behaviour marring her last show, forcefully pleads for the “punks” to stop.

Table 4.7. Japanese Romaji 03.

| Japanese Romaji |
|--|
| Yukiko: 「Doumo arigatou. Ee tanoshii konsaatomo ato ikkyoku to narimashita 」 「Eeto saigono kyoku no mae ni houkokushinakya ikenai koto ga arimasu 」 |
| Mima: 「Eeto. Watakushi Kirigoe Mima ha <i>Cham!</i> no ichinen toshite」 「Yamete! Kyō dake ha minna to tanoshiku sugoshi takattanoni 」 |

Table 4.8. Subtitle sample 03.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| Yukiko: Umm... Before our last song, we have news to tell you... |
| Mima: Um, I, Mima Kirigoe, had a fun time as a member of <i>CHAM!</i> ... |
| Mima: Stop it! Today... Just today... I wanted to have a good time with all of you! |

Table 4.9. Dubbing sample 03.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| Yukiko: Uhm, but before we sing our last song, we do have some news we'd like to share with all of you! |
| Mima: Ah, I, Mima Kirigoe, had a real fun time being a member of <i>Cham!</i> [...] |
| Mima: Stop it now! Tonight... I mean today, I just wanted us to please, just have a good time! |

What is immediately noticeable in the Japanese version of the script is the number of pauses on the part of all the members, especially Mima. She is clearly sad about having to tell her fans that she is leaving *Cham!* In this text, Yukiko starts off by saying “*ee...*” and “*eeto...*” Even Mima says *eeto* once herself. *Eeto* is a common phrase used by women in Japan, usually to express doubt. In this scene, it is used as vocal filler to convey the hesitation of the characters speaking on stage. The subtitled version of the dialogue, as expected, contains some differences from the Japanese script. Mima and Yukiko’s pauses at the beginning of the scene are more noticeable. This is because they are graphically rendered with an ellipsis, demonstrating Mima’s sadness, and perhaps doubt, over leaving *Cham!*

In the Japanese text, Yukiko uses the standard form of the verbs, as does Mima. When Mima wants to stop the fighting, however, she uses the word “*yamete*” (“stop”). The *-te* imperative form is a strong imperative more commonly used by men than women (Hiramoto

2013, 60), or according to Tanaka, only by men (Tanaka 2004, 28). Tanaka explains that “women are expected to use the *-nasai* suffix, which is added to the verb base” (ibid). In other words, Mima would be expected to use *yamenasai* instead of *yamete* in this situation.

Mima’s use of *yamete* is a stark contrast to the hesitant Mima who was using *eeto*, whilst pushing back her hair and looking down at the floor. The impact of Mima’s use of the *-te* imperative is enhanced by the film’s visuals, which feature a close up of her mouth as she speaks into the microphone. This, coupled with Mima’s use of the highly-formal 1PP *watakushi* instead of the more feminine *atashi* or even a standard *watashi*, provides evidence to the viewer that Mima is not a typical female anime character in the sense that she does not use the standard female forms of verbs and pronouns.

Interestingly, the heightened hesitation in the subtitles does not diminish the ferocity of Mima’s response when the ruckus in the audience takes place. Mima uses the imperative *yamete* when she addresses the hooligans. She again does not use the more common imperative form for women in Japan, *-nasai*, or *yamenasai* in this case. She adamantly insists that the troublemakers stop the commotion, using a strong verb form. This is expressed in the same emphatic manner as in the subtitles when she yells “Stop it!”, rather than a more subdued “Please stop.” The dubbing portrays her resolve in an even stronger way, as it has her yelling “Stop it now!” This strong language, along with Mima’s high-pitched voice, gives the dubbing the forceful Mima we also see in the original Japanese script, meaning that, concerning “the gender question”, Mima is as strong a female character in the dubbing as she is in the Japanese script.

It is important to note that the Japanese script uses the word *sotsugyō* when Mima refers to her “graduation” from *Cham!* This is a common trope in the *idol* scene whenever a

member quits a group. Fans and people in the business do not say that an *idol* “left” her band—she graduates instead. The dubbing does not use this euphemism. Instead, Mima says that the concert is her “last performance” with *Cham!* The subtitles, however, do use the word “graduate” (without the quotation marks) to reflect the specific term used in the Japanese script. The use of this word in the subtitles is something of an unusual translation, as the reason for using this word would only be understood by people with a working understanding of *idol* culture.

This is very much what Pérez-González (2014, 188) refers to as “dischrony” in multimodal information. The term “graduation” is culturally and socially loaded, and as a result there is a dischrony between the verbal message and the culture-specific symbolic information included in the message itself and the images presented by the scene. For most Anglophones there is no association between the word “graduation” and the three young ladies dressed in pink performing on stage.

4.1.4. Scene 04: Mima and Rumi talk about the fan blog about Mima



Fig.4.4. Mima and Rumi.

In this scene, Mima and Rumi have a brief discussion about a letter Mima received earlier from a fan detailing a blog called *Mima's Room*. It occurs right before Mima is about to speak her first lines in *Double Bind*. Mima asks Rumi to explain a blog to her, and Rumi tries to explain what it is. Mima still does not understand, even after Rumi's explanation.

Table 4.10. Japanese Romaji 04.

| <i>Japanese Romaji</i> |
|---|
| Mima 「Nee Rumi chan wakatta? sore?」 |
| Rumi 「Kore inntaanetto no hoomu peeji dayo 」 |
| Mima 「Aa saikinn hayatteru are. De nan n nano sore?」 |
| Rumi 「nn- nannteittara ii no kana? Pasokon tsuushin mitai namonn nanda kedo ne 」 |
| Mima 「Sorede... 」 |
| Rumi 「Kono Mima no heya ni rinku hatta chekoto ha kono Mima no heya ttenomo hoomu peeji no namae nano. Sappari?」 |
| Mima 「Un! Sappari! 」 |

Table 4.11. Subtitling sample 04.

| Official Subtitles |
|--|
| MM: Do you know what that note means, Rumi? |
| RM: It's an Internet home page. |
| MM: Oh, that thing that's been popular lately! |
| ... and what is it? |
| RM: How can I describe it? |
| It's kind of like computer networks. |
| MM: And? |
| RM: Considering that this person "put up a link to Mima's Room"... |
| ... this "Mima's room" thing is the title of a web site. |
| You don't get it, do you? |
| MM: Nope, not one bit. |

Table 4.12. Dubbing sample 04.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| Mima: What do you think, Rumi? Do you know what it means? |
| Rumi: *yawns* It's just a website, somebody took it off the internet. |
| Mima: Oh that's really popular lately! So what does it mean? |
| Rumi: hmm how can I describe it? It's kind of a like networking by using the computer. |
| Mima: Yeah and? |
| Rumi: Well it looks like this person, whoever it is, put up a link to Mima's room, which is the title of the website. That makes sense? |
| Mima: Uhm, not one bit! |

In the original Japanese script, Mima uses the informal past form of *wakaru* (“to understand”) when she asks Rumi “*wakatta?*” (“did you understand?”), as well as the informal “*uun*” (which Mima also used when speaking with her mother on the telephone). This tone indicates that it is a familiar interaction, as Mima and Rumi know each other. Rumi speaks in an informal manner with Mima, using feminine SFPs such as *-yo* (“right?”). Both Rumi and Mima Rumi also use the moderately-feminine SFP *-nano*. In the Japanese script Rumi addresses Mima in a motherly tone, as if explaining to a child how something works, using longer sounds, especially longer vowels.

Rumi's motherly demeanour with Mima is not conveyed in the subtitles, however. She simply states—and because of lack of space, quite rapidly—the concept of a blog. The dubbing does not address this either, as Rumi speaks quickly to Mima, rather than slowly explaining a blog to her as a mother would to a child. This demonstrates that the people who worked on the subbing and dubbing did not notice Rumi's tone in the original Japanese script, something that probably requires several viewings of the film to detect, or did not think of it as something important that needed to be conveyed in the dubbing. The dubbing misses a subtle cue about the state of Rumi's declining sanity. It shows her fatigue—she is

yawning from lack of sleep at the beginning of the scene—but it also portrays how much Rumi cares about Mima, and how she is trying to support Mima’s decisions with the faculties she has left.

At the end of her explanation about the blog, Rumi asks Mima if she understands—Mima states she does not. In the Japanese script, Rumi asks her “*Sappari?*”, which is an adverb that means “at all” (in other words, she asks “Do you understand at all?”). Mima replies with an informal “*un!*” (“Yes”), followed by “*Sappari!*” (“Not at all!”). In the dubbing, Mima and Rumi converse in an informal manner, with Rumi asking her “That make sense?”, to which Mima replies “Uhm, not one bit!” The dubbing portrays an informal interaction, with Rumi omitting the verb “does” from the sentence. The subtitles are informal as well, with Rumi asking Mima the question Rumi asks Mima the question “You don’t get it, do you?” Mima replies “Nope, not one bit.” The two characters in the subtitled version of the scene use, then, what Lakoff (2004) and Hiramoto (2013) label an expected way for women to speak with the use of tag-questions. The use of these questions portrays Rumi speaking to Mima in a condescending way, implying that Mima is ignorant and lacks knowledge of the Internet. Mima’s reply in the subtitled version is similar to hers in the dubbing, but the way Rumi’s question is phrased ends up emphasising Mima’s lack of knowledge about the internet.

4.1.5. Scene 05: Tadokoro and Rumi discuss Mima's development as an actress

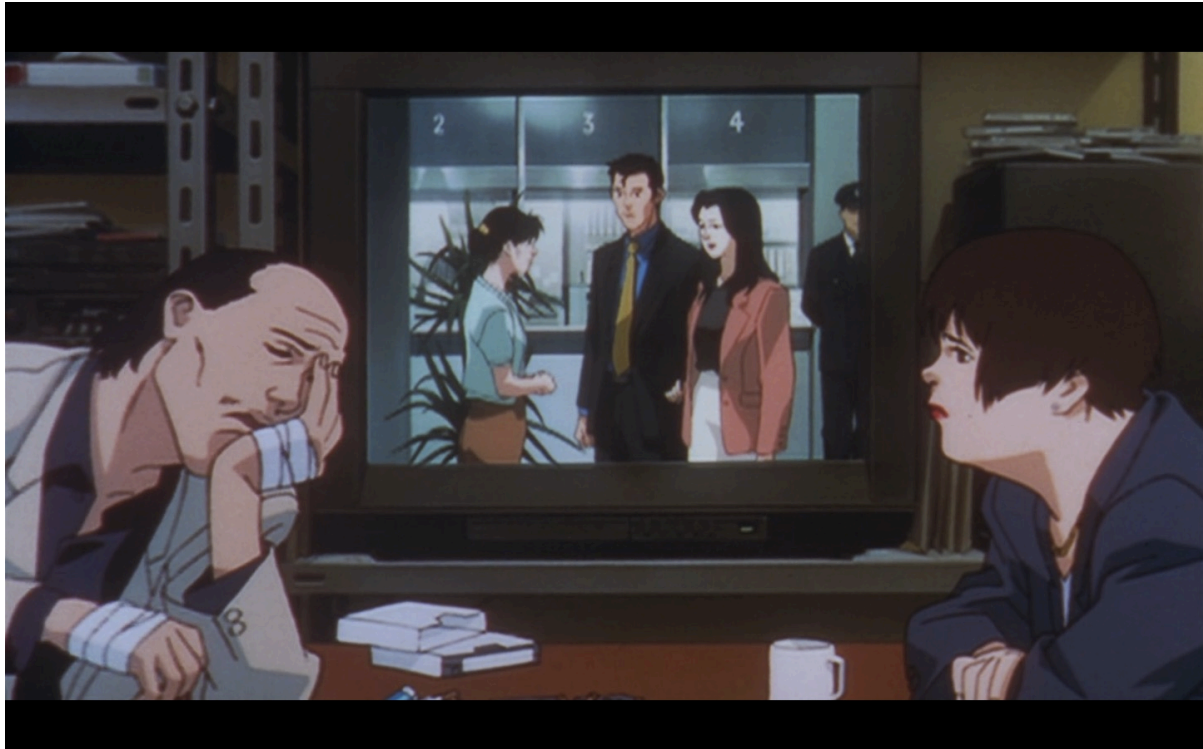


Fig.4.5. Tadokoro and Rumi. Mima's first scene in *Double Bind* shown in the background.

This scene is the only instance in which Tadokoro and Rumi interact with each other sans Mima. They are at their office, discussing Mima's lack of film roles. Tadokoro is smoking a cigar, with his hand still bandaged from the bomb explosion. He is annoyed at Rumi's insistence that Mima should be marketed as a pop *idol*. Tadokoro claims that acting roles will eventually start coming her way, but Rumi is doubtful. Just as they are having this discussion, an employee steps in and informs them that *Cham!*, now a duo, has entered the top 100 list on the radio.

Table 4.13. Japanese Romaji 05.

| <i>Japanese Romaji</i> |
|---|
| Rumi: 「Tattano katto desuyo! 」 |
| Tadokoro: 「uun 」 |
| Rumi: 「 <i>Cham!</i> wo sotsugyou shite made suru shigoto desuka? Korega 」 |
| Tadokoro: 「Rumi-chan konna yaku demo renndora no regyuraa tottekurunoga donna ni taihenn dato omouyon 」 |
| Rumi: 「Sorekurai wakarimasuyo. Kedo」 |
| Tadokoro: 「Koko ga shounennba nannda. Mima ga ichininmae no jyoyuu toshite mitomerareruka doukanona? 」 |
| Rumi: 「Demo Mima ha aidoru de utte ikubeki desuyo! 」 |
| Tadokoro: 「Rumi-chan Hidaka Rumi ga genneki datta korotoha jidai ga chigaunoyo. |
| Rumi: 「Wakatteremasuyo...」 |
| Tadokoro: 「Ima doki aidoru appeal suru basho jitai ga nai dayo! Mima ga ikinokeru doka no sentakku nandate?」 |
| Rumi: 「Sumimasen, ne, ikonerakute」 |
| Tadokoro: Tanomu, Rumi-chan! Mima ga jyuu ni tenshun dekiru nara, sore koshite koto ga nainoyo!」 |
| Rumi: 「Uta wo utaitakute Tōkyō ni de dekita no ni」 |
| Tadokoro: 「Kangaetemomiteyo. Rekoodo seerusu nannte jimusyo ni ha taishite rieki ni nan nainoyo. Tohaittemo tashikani mou chotto debann ha hoshii yona. 」 |

Table 4.14. Subtitles sample 05.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| Rumi: Just three shots. Is this work worth leaving <i>CHAM!</i> for? |
| Tadokoro: Rumi. Do you know how hard is it to get a character... |
| Rumi: Yes, I do. But... |
| Tadokoro: This is where Mima proves if she can be seen as a real actress or not. |
| Rumi: But we should sell Mima as a pop <i>idol!</i> |
| Tadokoro: Really. Times are different from when Rumi Hidaka was a working pop <i>idol</i> . |
| Rumi: I know that. |
| Tadokoro: Nowadays, there are no places for pop idols to appeal to the masses. This is the branch point that will decide if Mima lasts or not. |
| Rumi: Well, excuse me for not surviving. |
| Tadokoro: Please, Rumi! |
| There's nothing better than having Mima be able to change into an actress! |
| Rumi: She came to Tokyo to sing... |
| Tadokoro: Think... |
| On record sales we make practically nothing! But I do wish they'd use her a little bit more... |

Table 4.15. Official dubbing sample 05.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| Rumi: Just three shots of her?? |
| Tadokoro: Ahmm... |
| Rumi: Do you really think this is really worth it for her to leave <i>Cham!</i> ? Do you? |
| Tadokoro: Rumi, darling, do you how much work it is in getting a recurring role in a series? |
| Rumi: I understand all that, however... |
| Tadokoro: This is where Mima proves herself, she's very close to establishing credibility as a real actress. |
| Rumi: Right..., but we should be selling Mima as a pop- <i>idol!</i> |
| Tadokoro: Ah c'mon, times have changed since Rumi Hidaka was a working pop <i>idol!</i> |
| Rumi: I know that... |
| Tadokoro: Nowadays there are no places for pop-idols to appeal to the masses; this is the turning point that will decide if Mima lasts or not! |
| Rumi: Well excuse me, sir, for not surviving... |
| Tadokoro: Please, Rumi... there'd be nothing better than for her to be an actress and become a star. |
| Rumi: She came all the way to Tokyo to make it as a singer! |
| Tadokoro: Rumi, stop and think about it, hun. Record sales we make practically nothing, it'd be fine if she could sell more. Well you know I do agree with you, I wish they'd start using her a bit more. |

In the Japanese script, Rumi still speaks in a feminine manner, as she uses particles such as *ne*, but she remains formal with Tadokoro. For example, she uses *sumimasen* instead of the informal *sumanai* (“sorry”), whilst Tadokoro uses the informal form of verbs, such as *omouyon* (“I think”). This means that there is a difference in the status between the two characters, which is also seen in Scene 02. Whilst Rumi must always show respect to Tadokoro and use a formal form of the language, Tadokoro considers that he is in a superior position, which means that he allows himself to use an informal language with Rumi, even if she is his colleague.

The scene, much like the first interaction between Rumi and Tadokoro, depicts Tadokoro implicitly exerting his power over Rumi through his treatment of her in conversation. In the dubbing, he uses *darling* and *hun* to address Rumi, words that are often used by men to denote a dismissive attitude toward women. The difference of power between the two is evident when Tadokoro comments that Rumi is an “extinct *idol*,” to which Rumi sarcastically replies “Well excuse me, sir, for not surviving”.

The words *darling* and *hun* do not appear in the subtitles, which do, however, show hesitation on the part of both characters through the use of ellipses. Just as in the Japanese script, Tadokoro addresses Rumi by her name, but Rumi does not do the same when addressing Tadokoro. The subtitles attempt to convey as much information as possible in a limited space—the dubbing has almost twice the number of words—but they fail to capture the subtle ways in which Tadokoro exerts his power over Rumi in the Japanese version of the script.

4.1.6. Scene 06: Phantom Mima and Mima interact

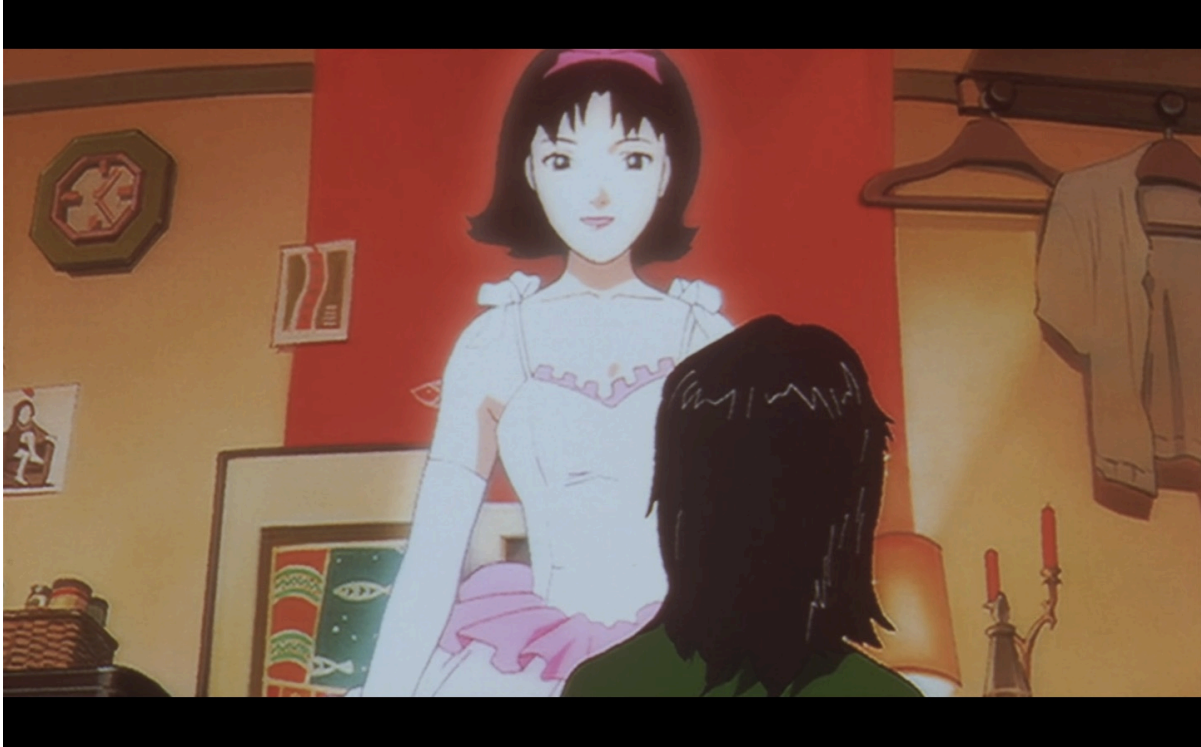


Fig.4.6. Phantom Mima and Mima.

In this scene, Mima begins to definitively lose her mind. The Phantom Mima that has sporadically appeared throughout the film now addresses her directly. She tells Mima that her reputation is “tarnished” due to the rape scene she performed, and that no one likes an *idol* with “that kind of reputation”. Mima, stupefied, asks Phantom Mima to reveal her identity. The illusion cryptically replies that she will be taking the spotlight instead of Mima.

Table 4.16. Japanese Romaji 06.

| Japanese Romaji |
|--|
| Mima: 「Chigauyo kore ha watashi janai! 」 |
| Phantom: 「Atarimaeyo kore ga hontou no Mima damono. Honntou ha aidoru ni modoritaito omotterukuseni 」 |
| Mima: 「Chigau datte watashi ha mou 」 |
| Phantom Mima: 「Watashi ha mou? Souyone mou aidoru nannkajya naimonne. Datte anata ha mou yogorechatta mono. Yogoreta aidoru nannte daremo suki ni nannai yone? 」 |
| Mima: 「Chigau Chigaumon 」 |
| Phantom Mima: 「Anata ha mou ano hikari no naka niha modorenai. Demo iino watashi ga irukara. Kore kara ha watashi ga hikari de anata ga kage yo 」 |
| Mima: 「Naniitteruno? Anata dare nano? 」 |
| Phantom Mima: 「Dare mo anata nannte suki janai. Yogorechatta yogorechatta 」 |
| Mima: 「Yamete yametettara. Watashi ha yogoretenannka... Matte matte! 」 |

Table 4.17. Subtitling sample 06.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| Mima: This... This isn't true! I'm not writing any of this! |
| Phantom Mima: <i>Of course! The REAL Mima is writing this! I know that deep down in your heart you want to be a pop idol again.</i> |
| Mima: No! I'm no longer... |
| Phantom Mima: <i>No longer what? Oh yeah, you're no longer a pop idol. You're a filthy woman now. Nobody likes idols with tarnished reputations!</i> |
| Mima: That's not true! That's not true! |
| Fans: Mimirin! |
| Phantom Mima: <i>You can't step back into the spotlight now... But that's all right. I'M here. From now on, I'll be in the light, and you'll be in the shadows.</i> |
| Mima: What are you saying!? Who in the world are you!? |
| Phantom Mima: <i>Nobody likes you anymore. You're tarnished! FILTHY!</i> |
| Mima: Stop it! Stop it! I am not tarnished! Wait! WAIT! |

Table 4.18. Dubbing sample 06.

| Official Dubbing |
|--|
| Mima: What?? This isn't true, I didn't write this! |
| Phantom Mima: Of course you didn't! The real Mima is writing this! I know that deep down in your heart you want to be a pop- <i>idol</i> again! |
| Mima: No! It's not true! I'm no longer... |
| Phantom Mima: ... no longer, what...? Oh yeah that's right, you're no longer a pop <i>idol</i> ! You're a filthy woman now, like a slut! No one likes a pop <i>idol</i> , with a tarnished reputation. |
| Mima: It's not true! It's not! |
| Phantom Mima: You won't be able to step back into that spotlight now! It's all right, you don't have to worry; I'm here. From now on, I'll be in the light, and you'll be in the shadows! |
| Mima: What're you saying?? Who in the hell are you? |
| Phantom Mima: Nobody cares for you anymore! You're tarnished, and, you're filthy! |
| Mima: Stop it! Stop it I am not tarnished! Wait... no! Wait...! |

In the Japanese script, both Mima and Phantom Mima address each other using a neutral language, employing 1PPs and 2PPs, such as *watashi* (“I”) and *anata* (“you”). This is significant because it shows that even though Phantom Mima is a part of Mima, the two are separate entities in Mima’s mind. This is demonstrated by the distance created by the use of the standard pronouns *watashi* and *anata*, instead of more familiar ones, such as *atashi* (“I”) or *kimi* (“you”). Phantom Mima is a detached being that bluntly states her intention to take over the host. Mima also uses moderately-feminine SFPs such as *-nano* and *-no*. However, due to the intensity of the scene and Mima’s confusion at Phantom Mima, I believe that the use of this SFP is actually Mima trying to place herself in a stronger, defensive position against Phantom Mima, to “assert herself”, as Abe (1998, 63) explains.

The language in this scene is much stronger in the dubbing than in the subtitles. In both, Phantom Mima tells Mima “You’re a filthy woman now!” The dubbing, however, adds the phrase “Like a slut!—besides including Phantom Mima’s insults of calling Mima “filthy”

and “tarnished”—something that increases the objectification of Mima. The subtitles, as a close rendering of the Japanese text, do not have this kind of addition; instead, the subtitles try to compensate the forcefulness by writing certain words all in capital letters, e.g. “REAL!” and “FILTHY!” These words are used to emphasise Mima’s “dirtiness”. No other words are added, and no modulations are carried out in order to convey this feeling. Hence, the subtitles emphasise Mima’s dirtiness through capitalisation, but the dubbing has a “dirtier” portrayal of Mima compared to the original Japanese version by making Phantom Mima insult Mima more through the use of expletives that were not part of the Japanese script.

4.1.7. Scene 07: Rei and Yukiko talk about Mima

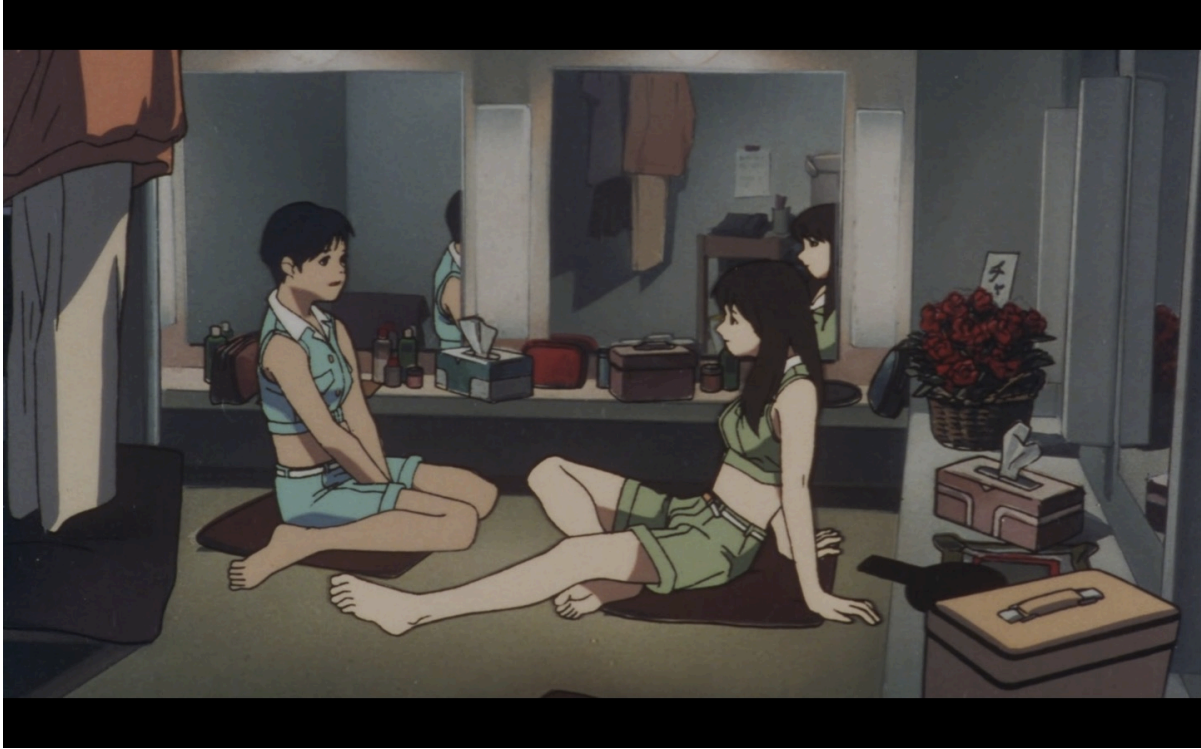


Fig.4.7. Rei and Yukiko.

The following scene depicts Rei and Yukiko—now a duo as the remaining members of *Cham!*—talking about Mima. Her former bandmates are discussing whether or not Mima is walking into trouble by going to a photography session with a photographer who is known for taking strip photos. Rei is worried about Mima, but Yukiko tells her that Mima has no qualms about stripping.

Table 4.19. Japanese Romaji 07.

| Japanese Romaji |
|---|
| Rei: 「Demosaa daijyoubukana Mimanee ｣ |
| Yukiko: 「Naniga?｣ |
| Rei: 「Kyou no kameramann nugase sennmonn nanndatteyo ｣ |
| Yukiko: 「Naniittheno. Ano hito nara mou naretamonnyo. Imagoro kameramann no maede kebbo-nnyo kebbo ｣ |
| Rumi 「Mou debannjyanaino? Hayakushinasai｣ |
| Rei: 「Haai｣ |

Table 4.20. Subtitling sample 07.

| Official Subtitles |
|--|
| Rei: But will Mima be all right? |
| Yukiko: Why? |
| Rei: That photographer specialises in getting people to strip! |
| Yukiko: So what? She's got that part down pat! I'm sure she's totally showing it off in front of the photographer! Like, TOTALLY! |
| Rumi: Isn't it time you were on? Hurry up. |
| Rei: Yes'm. |

Table 4.21. Dubbing sample 07.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| Rei: I was wondering, do you think Mima's going to be all right? |
| Yukiko: Yeah, why? |
| Rei: Well... that photographer... he's known for getting people to strip. |
| Yukiko: So what? She doesn't care! I'm sure she can't wait to take it off! In front of the photographer and everyone, like totally "I'm here!" |
| Rumi: Isn't it time you girls get ready? Stop fooling around. |
| Rei: All right. |

In the original Japanese script, both women speak in a feminine manner with SFPs such as *ne* ("right?") and *-monnyo*, which is a whimsical variation of the highly-feminine SFP *-monne*. When Rumi walks in, she speaks in a standard feminine manner, using the *-nasai*

imperative form when she orders “*Hayahushinasai*” (“Hurry up!”). All the female characters in this scene actually speak in feminine and highly-feminine SFPs, meaning that the scriptwriters wanted to reflect that *idols* speak in a feminine manner.

This specific femininity of Rei and Yukiko’s vocabulary is not reflected in the English subtitles nor dubbing, the language in English is not feminine in any particular manner. However, the informal style of speaking is included in both translations, and is shown by the use of phrases such as “like totally”. In the dubbing, when Yukiko says “I’m here!,” she does so in a playful manner whilst opening her legs, as if she were Mima stripping for the photographer. In the Japanese script she says “*ga-chan*”, and whilst the onomatopoeic effect is lost in the dubbing, its delivery does allow it to capture Yukiko’s mockery of Mima. In the subtitles this is conveyed by writing the word “TOTALLY!” in capital letters, which emphasises the Yukiko’s mocking, albeit without the onomatopoeic effect of the Japanese script and the dubbing.

4.1.8. Scene 08: Me-Mania attacks Mima



Fig.4.8. Me-Mania attempting to rape Mima.

In this scene, Me-Mania attacks Mima in the same movie set where she was gang-raped for the *Double Bind* series. This is, in fact, the only instance in *Perfect Blue* where Me-Mania and the real Mima interact face to face and engage in dialogue. Me-Mania hits Mima, momentarily knocking her out, and gets on top of her. But as Me-Mania salivates over Mima's naked body, Mima reaches for a hammer on the set and hits him in the head. Me-Mania dies screaming just moments later.

Table 4.22. Japanese Romaji 08.

| <i>Japanese Romaji</i> |
|---|
| Mima 「Dareka tasukete! 」 |
| Me-Mania 「Omae no koe nannka darenimo todokumonka 」 |
| Mima 「Anata dare?Doushite konna 」 |
| Me-Mania 「Bokuno daijina Mima-rin wo mamorunnda! 」 |
| Mima 「Watashi watashi ga Mima yo 」 |
| Me-Mania 「Chigau chigau chigau chigau chigau. Boku ga Mimania datte siranakatta jyanaika. Mimarinn no huri shiyagatte 」 |
| Mima 「Aa yamete iya iya 」 |
| Me-Mania 「Kono kuchi de ano raitaa yara kameramann wo tarashikonndanoka? Mimirin wo yogoshi yagatte! 」 |
| Mima 「Masaka anata ga 」 |
| Me-Mania 「Honntou no Mimirinn ha mainiti bokuni meeru wo kurerunnda. Omae ga jyama bakkari surutte 」 |
| Mima 「Anata ga koroshitano?」 |
| Me-Mania 「Mousugu omaemonna 」 |

Table 4.23. Subtitling 08.

| Official Subtitles |
|---|
| MM: Somebody help me! |
| Me-Mania: Like anyone can hear YOUR voice right now! |
| MM: Who are you!? |
| Why are you doing this!? |
| Me-Mania: I'm protecting my dear Mimirin! |
| MM: But-But I'm Mima! |
| Me-Mania: No, no, no, no, NO! |
| You didn't know I was Me-mania! You're just PRETENDING to be Mimirin! |
| Mima: STOP! NO! STOP! |
| Me-Mania: Did you fool that screenwriter and photographer with this little mouth? |
| You tarnished Mimirin's name! |
| MM: Can it be... that you... |
| Me-Mania: The real Mimirin e-mails me every day! |
| And she says that you keep getting in her way! |
| MM: You killed them!? |
| Me-Mania: And you'll die soon too! |

Table 4.24. Dubbing sample 08.

| Official Dubbing |
|---|
| Mima: Ah, somebody, help me! |
| Me-Mania: Like anyone can hear you right now! |
| Mima: Who are you? W-why are you doing this? |
| Me-Mania: I'm protecting my dear Mima-rin! Whaddaya think?? |
| Mima: Protecting... but I'm Mima-rin! |
| Me-Mania: No no no no no no no! Dammit! You didn't know I was Me-Mania! You're just pretending to be Mima-rin! |
| Mima: No, stop! |
| Me-Mania: You tarnished Mima-rin's name! Fooling that photographer and screenwriter! With that little mouth of yours! |
| Mima: But... how can it be that you... |
| Me-Mania: The real Mima-rin is nice, she emails me every day. And she says you're in her way! |
| Mima: Did you kill them? Did you? |
| Me-Mania: And you'll die soon too!! |

In the Japanese script, Me-Mania uses the 2PP *omae* to address Mima. *Omae* is a very informal pronoun, and Me-Mania uses it pejoratively towards Mima. By employing this specific pronoun, Me-Mania shortens the psychological and social distance between himself and his victim. This serves to bring Mima down from her status as an *idol* and actress, into one that is below Me-Mania. This allows him to exert physical and psychological control over her through his attempt to rape her, and the use of the overly pejorative *omae*.

Although Me-Mania uses a pejorative pronoun, *omae*, towards Mima, and a slightly-masculine one, *boku*, for himself, Mima keeps Me-Mania off by using the neutral *anata* (“you”) and *watashi* (“I”). She is in extreme distress and is keeping a linguistic distance from him. Mima uses the *-te* imperative form, which is used mostly by men (Hiramoto 2013, 60), when she says *yamete* (“stop”), something expected under these dire circumstances. Mima also uses the moderately feminine SFP *-no* in “*koroshitano?*” (“killed”), but as Abe (1998)

explains, by using this particular SPF she is not being weak, rather, she is asserting herself. This also contrasts with the highly-masculine SFP Me-Mania uses in *-monna*. Me-Mania and Mima are not only clashing physically, but also verbally: Me-Mania is attempting to rape Mima and refers to her pejoratively with *omae* whilst also using highly-masculine SFPs like *-monna*, whilst Mima is pushing Me-Mania away and using imperatives (instead of requests), as well as feminine SFPs such as *-no* in order to get away and survive.

Me-Mania in general speaks in a pejorative tone towards Mima in this scene. His tone is one of complete disdain towards the *idol* he says he loves. He also curses at Mima in the dubbing, attacking Mima in a different manner than the Japanese version. In the dubbing Mima pauses several times during the confrontation (e.g. “W-why”, “But... how can it be you...”) which are not part of the Japanese version. This is a hesitation that is added to Mima’s character, although it does not make her look weak, just simply frightened.

The dubbing also has an interesting translation of one of Me-Mania’s lines. He tells Mima “*Kono kuchi de ano raitaa yara kameramann wo tarashikonndanoka? Mimirin wo yogoshi yagatte!*,” which the dubbing translates as: “You tarnished Mima-rin’s name! Fooling that photographer and screenwriter! With that little mouth of yours!” In the subtitles, he says: “Did you fool that screenwriter and photographer with this little mouth? You tarnished Mima-rin’s name!” The dubbing has a slight, but significant difference. By adding the possessive “that little mouth of yours,” the tone of the line becomes more pejorative than the “This little mouth” used in the subtitles.

4.1.9. Scene 09: Rumi's second assassination attempt on Mima



Fig.4.9. A deranged Rumi trying to assassinate Mima.

This scene reveals that Rumi is completely deranged, and that she is, in fact, the person who was conspiring with Me-Mania to get rid of Mima. They both believe that Mima has betrayed them by going into acting, instead of being an *idol*. Rumi takes Mima to Mima's room, but once inside, Mima realises that she's actually in Rumi's room. Rumi then reveals her true intentions, wearing a red dress that is similar in design but a different colour than the white and pink one Mima wore as an *idol*. Rumi attacks Mima with an ice pick, and although wounded, Mima escapes to the balcony with Rumi pursuing her. Rumi picks up an umbrella and stabs Mima with it, but Mima begins to fight back. As Rumi tries to choke Mima with the umbrella, Mima removes Rumi's wig. This causes Rumi to go "out of character," and she stops attacking to try and pick up her wig, stabbing herself with broken glass in the process.

Table 4.25. Japanese Romaji 09.

| Japanese Romaji | |
|-----------------|--|
| Rumi | 「Saa owarini shiyō. Mima ha hutarimo iranainn damon」 |
| Mima | 「Atashi ga Mima yo」 |
| Rumi | 「Hahaha! Jyoudann! Mima ha aidoru nanndayo. Anata ha kitanai nisemonoyo」 |
| Mima | 「Sonna no shiranai! Watashi ha watashiyo!」 |

Table 4.26. Subtitling sample 09.

| Official Subtitles | |
|--------------------|---|
| Rumi: | Let's end all of this. We don't need two Mimas! |
| Mima: | I AM MIMA! |
| Rumi: | That's funny! Mima is a pop <i>idol</i> ! You're just a dirty old impostor! |
| Mima: | LIKE I CARE! I AM WHO I AM!! |

Table 4.27. Dubbing sample 09.

| Official Dubbing | |
|------------------|---|
| Rumi: | Let's end all of this. We don't need two Mimas now, do we? |
| Mima: | I am Mima! |
| Rumi: | Ha-ha! That's funny. Mima is a pop <i>idol</i> , and you're just a dirty, old impostor! |
| Mima: | You're the impostor! I'm not going to take this anymore! |

This scene is notable on many levels. Rumi believes she is Mima, and in the Japanese script her language is more feminine than usual. For example, she uses the feminine SFP *-yō*, as well as the moderately-feminine *-mon*. The SFPs are not only feminine, but juvenile, and *-mon* is used to express dissatisfaction. Rumi changes the way she dresses to “become” Mima, but she also shifts from an adult manner of speech to a juvenile one, with more feminine SFPs that are not used by her in other scenes in the movie.

This is not reflected in the subtitles, where Rumi says “Mima is a pop *idol!*” It is certainly difficult to render such a nuanced change in character in subtitles. The subtitler opted to, once again, use capital letters to emphasise certain phrases and to denote Mima’s panic at the fact that Rumi wants to kill her. The dubbing, however, does take into account Rumi’s personality change. Not only is Rumi’s voice performed with a higher pitch than in the rest of the film, it also has an echo. This is done to emphasise the fact that Rumi is completely insane, in order to heighten the tension in the scene, and to highlight that she is trying to reach a pitch similar to Mima’s as an *idol*.

After Rumi reveals herself to Mima, the Japanese script has her saying “*Anata wa kitanai nise-monoyo!*” which translates to “You’re just a dirty, old impostor!”. Rumi uses a relatively standard *anata* (“you”), but this is different from the usual way that Rumi addresses Mima. She would normally refer to Mima by her name, but she does not in this case because Rumi believes that she is, in fact, Mima. Neither the subtitles nor the dubbing capture this difference in how Rumi addresses Mima in their confrontation. The subtitles do not even employ the all capital letters form for any of the words in Rumi’s lines—they simply translate the Japanese script literally.

Finally, Mima is angry enough to take the initiative and defend herself instead of running away, and says “*Sonna no shiranai! Watashi wa atashi yo!*”, which translates to “I don’t know about that! I am me!” Mima uses the informal female form “*Atashi*” to say “me”. This sentence is completely changed in the dubbing, as she says “You’re the impostor! I’m not going to take this anymore!”, a sentence that is much more assertive than what is said in the Japanese version, as it is an implicit attack towards Rumi. The subtitles, as expected, include a close rendering of the Japanese text, but in capital letters (“LIKE I CARE! I AM

WHO I AM!!”) in order to convey Mima’s anger and desperation.

4.1.10. Scene 10: Final scene: “I am who I am!”

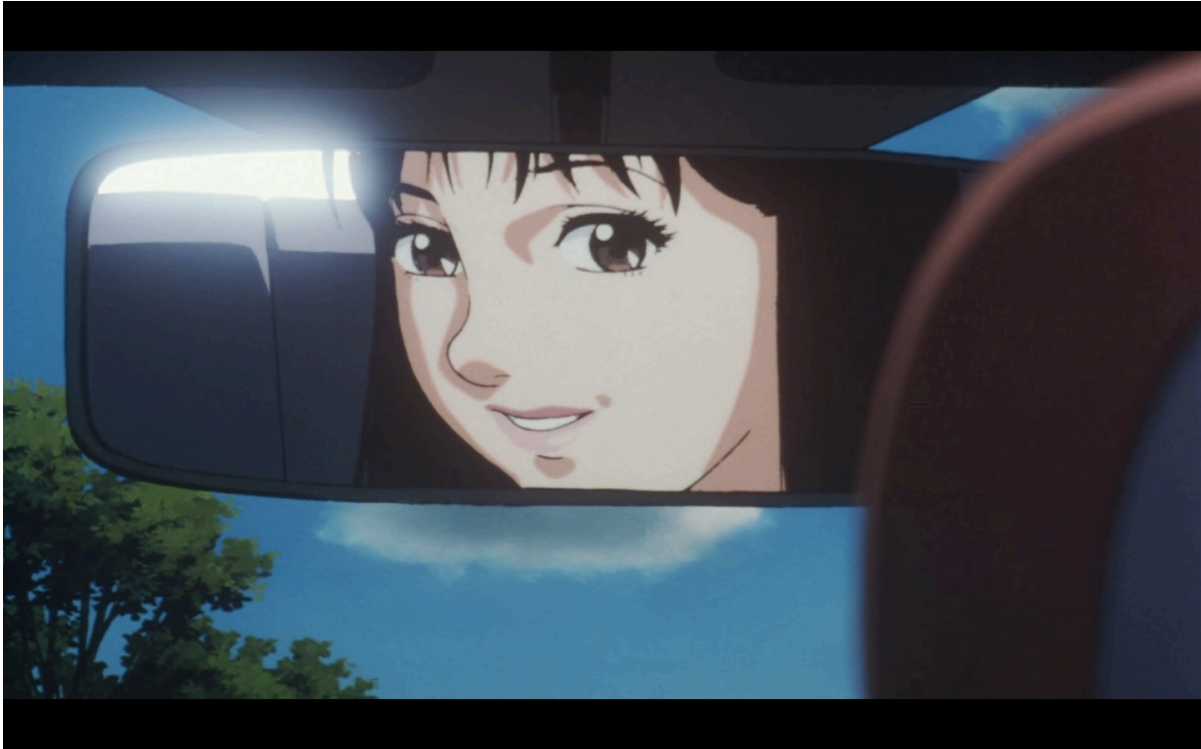


Fig.4.10. Mima staring at the rearview mirror in the film’s final scene.

In the film’s final scene, we see Mima visiting Rumi at the mental hospital, with the sky coloured in “blue.” Rumi never recovers from her mental breakdown and still believes she is Mima, the *idol*. On her way out of the hospital, Mima overhears two of the nurses debating whether or not she is “the” famous Mima Kirigoe. This lets the viewer know that Mima has become a successful actress, but the nurses conclude it cannot possibly be her because they (wrongly) assume Mima would have no reason to visit the hospital. Mima walks on by, and gets into her car. The final shot features Mima looking at herself in the mirror, and speaking the film’s final line:

Table 4.28. Japanese Romaji 10.

| Japanese Romaji |
|------------------------------|
| 「Watashi ha hon mono dayo! 」 |

Table 4.29. Subtitles sample 10.

| Official Subtitles |
|---------------------|
| Mima: No, I'm real! |

Table 4.30. Dubbing sample 10.

| Official Dubbing |
|-------------------------------|
| Mima: No, I'm the real thing! |

In the Japanese script, Mima says “*watashi ha honmono dayo*”, which literally means “I’m the real thing”. Mima, as in most other places in the script, uses the standard 1PP *watashi*, instead of the more feminine forms *atashi* or *watakushi*. She also uses the SFP *-yo*, which is normally used by both male and female speakers of the language. In other words, the language Mima uses in this phrase is not particularly feminine—as in most of the other cases where she speaks—but neutral.

In the subtitles, this line is translated as “No, I’m real!” This line shows that Mima is finally able to distinguish between reality and fantasy, although the ending is open to interpretation. Both the dubbing and the subtitles show an assertive Mima, herself convinced that she is real. Even if the translations are simply conveying the intended message of the Japanese script, and do not take into account Mima as a character and her particular use of *watashi* (instead of *atashi*, for example), this last line of the script reflects the ongoing characteristic of the film’s subtitles and dubbing: That the unmanipulated manner in which

the film was translated means that the message of the Japanese text is undiluted. This will be further discussed in the conclusions.

Chapter V:

Discussion and Conclusions

5.0. Discussion

This section analyses how every major character is portrayed in the Japanese version, and how each character is subtitled and dubbed. The section is organised by the film's characters: Mima, Phantom Mima, Rumi, Tadokoro, Re and Yukiko and the fans.

5.1. Mima

My analysis of the Japanese script reveals a main female character that speaks—and acts—differently from the majority of female characters in anime. In the Japanese script, Mima uses the 1PP *watashi* 34 times, whilst she says *watakushi* only once, and *atashi* twice. *Watashi* is a neutral 1PP, whilst *watakushi* is a highly-formal version of *watashi*, and *atashi* a feminine form of it. For most of the film, therefore, Mima does not speak in a specifically-feminine manner. Mima actually only uses *watakushi* when she is still an *idol*, whilst she is delivering her farewell from *Cham!* (see section 4.1.3.). Even Mima, the *idol*, uses standard or highly-formal 1PPs, showing that she speaks differently from *idols* in general, as can be observed when comparing with the feminine speech uttered by Rei and Yukiko (section 4.1.8.) With the exception of the scene when Me-Mania is trying to kill Mima, Mima uses a neutral 1PP, *watashi*. Even if Mima uses *atashi* during the rape scene, I argue that, as Abe (1998) does, that the use of a feminine 1PP in this case means that she is “asserting herself” against Me-Mania, not that she is showing weakness towards him.

The use of *watashi*, instead of other pronouns, and the decision to have Mima go from a highly-formal *watakushi* to a neutral *watashi*, could be considered an unconscious choice on the part of Kon and Murai (the film's screenwriters). However, as I have attempted to show in this work, I believe that Kon is a feminist. All of his films have strong and independent female characters, and in the case of *Perfect Blue* this can be observed in Mima's actions and vocabulary. Hence, it is more likely that the use of this specific pronoun (*watashi*) was a deliberate choice, and that Kon and Murai wanted her to speak in a neutral manner to play up her strength as a character.

Mima's use of 2PPs also reinforces this argument, as she uses *anata* (you) throughout the entire film. The most notable instance is when Me-Mania is attempting to rape her. The psychopath is trying to get close to her not only physically, but also linguistically by using the 2PP *omae* (you), a highly-pejorative and informal pronoun. Mima fights back physically, eventually killing Me-Mania with a hammer, and linguistically too by referring to him as *anata*, a neutral, distant pronoun in this context. In other words, Mima asserts distance by using the standard 2PP *anata*.

Mima never uses the informal pronoun *kimi* (you), even when referring to her other self. Phantom Mima uses *anata*, which is curious since Phantom Mima is part of Mima. Mima, of course, does not understand Phantom Mima and feels threatened by her presence, so it is only natural that she uses the 2PP *anata*.

Mima uses different SFPs, depending on the situation. With her mother she uses highly informal, feminine SFPs like *nya* or *wann*. Overall, however, she does not use any particularly feminine SFPs, as she favours either informal SFPs, such as *-yo*, or neutral and formal verbs such as *desu* ("to be"). This contrasts, for example, with Rei and Yukiko's use of

feminine SFPs such as the highly-feminine SFP *-monnyo*, a variation of *-monne*. Furthermore, in the cases where Mima does use moderately-feminine SFPs (e.g. *-nano* in Scene 05, and *-no* in Scene 07), she does so in order to exalt or assert herself, as Abe (1998) has explained. In conclusion, this means that Mima employs a combination of neutral and formal 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs, which conjoined with a sporadic use of moderately-feminine SFPs, means that she speaks in a strong, assertive manner, very differently from the way in which most female anime characters speak.

The subtitles, as I have demonstrated in my analysis, follow the Japanese text closely, and do not impose any kind of gendered censorship (Feral 2011). The use of a gendered vocabulary in Japanese, specifically with the 1PPs and SFPs, cannot be rendered in English as these specific linguistic resources do not exist in English. A way to show in English the distance between two characters who use specific 1PPs in Japanese could be through the addition of denigratory (e.g. “Bastard”) or loving (e.g. “Dear”) words depending on the context, which was done in the dubbing with the addition of swear words. The subtitles try to compensate—even with a lack of space and absence of tonal variation—through an uncommon use of capitalisation, e.g. when Mima yells “I AM MIMA!” (as seen in Scene 10). The dubbing, however, has sound, so the production team can play with the tones of spoken language and use voice to convey a message through the tone of voice that a character is using at a specific moment. One example of this use of vocal tone to express the intent and sentiment of a character occurs early on in the film, when Mima is giving her farewell address to the audience at her final *Cham!* concert. As I have explained in a previous section, Mima is interrupted by a melee started by some rowdy fans. The dubbing portrays a more forceful Mima than the subtitles, as she yells “Stop it now!” Not only does she convey her

orders through her choice of words, but also through her tone—the “grain of her voice”. This does not come through in the subtitles, as these simply translate her as saying “Stop it”.

5.2. Phantom Mima

Overall, Phantom Mima does not use feminine 1PPs like *atashi*, and uses the standard *watashi*, as well as the standard 2PP *anata* instead of the more familiar *kimi*. Hence, as a hallucination, she does not speak in a familiar tone with Mima. In all their conversations, Phantom Mima and Mima treat each other as a distant or threatening other. Phantom Mima, aside from having a younger (higher-pitched) and distorted tone of voice than Mima, does not really employ feminine SFPs.

In some of the more aggressive scenes from the film, Phantom Mima calls Mima a “slut” in the dubbing. This increases the intensity of the violence against Mima, but it is not a phrase included in the subtitles, nor is it part of the original Japanese script. In the subtitles, the violence of the language is expressed through the use of capitalisation of the derogatory words spoken by Phantom Mima, such as “FILTHY!” Like in the dubbed version, this emphasises that Mima “has been tainted”. The distance between Mima and Phantom Mima is not conveyed in English through the specific pronouns the character use, but through the pejorative way Phantom Mima refers to Mima.

The dubbing takes the adversarial relationship between Mima and Phantom Mima even further, adding the phrase “Like a slut!” (in the scene where Phantom Mima tells Mima she is “tainted”). This phrase does not appear in the Japanese script nor in the subtitles. In the subtitles, the Phantom Mima’s harsh tone is conveyed by the use of capitalisation, emphasising the pejorative adjectives used against Mima, e.g. “FILTHY!” Phantom Mima is

harsher and treats Mima in a worse manner in the dubbing than in the other two versions, creating a much more aggressive distance between the two characters through the use of swear words.

5.3. Tadokoro and Rumi

Tadokoro speaks with a “manly” demeanour most of the time, especially when he is discussing business matters with Rumi. Through the use of highly-masculine SFPs such as *-zo* (e.g. in Scene 2), Tadokoro exercises his power over Rumi. Though they both have more or less the same rank as Mima’s managers, Tadokoro is a man, and shows that he has more power in the relationship in the way he speaks. This is expressed through his use of highly-masculine SFPs like *-ro* and *-zo*, although his use of such a strong SFPs could also be seen as an indication that he feels threatened by Rumi’s adversarial positions regarding Mima’s career. Yet it is clear that, socially, Rumi occupies a lower rank than Tadokoro; Tadokoro addresses Rumi in an informal manner, yet Rumi shows deference to him and uses formal or standard form of verbs such as *sumimasen* (“Sorry”).

The information contained in the socially-loaded SFPs uttered by each character, however, is not reflected in either the dubbing or the subtitles. This is an example of the dischrony that Pérez-González (2014, 188) refers to. The SFPs transmit specific information about the distance between Tadokoro and Rumi. Whilst both characters are Mima’s managers, the fact that Tadokoro occupies a higher position than Rumi may be lost to English viewers, as this information is not included through modulations or expansions (e.g. by including condescending words like “honey” or “dear”) in either the subtitles or dubbing. Even if, in the dubbing, Rumi’s tone is more assertive towards Tadokoro than in the Japanese

script, she does not appear as assertive in the subtitles, as the only sign of strength from her comes from the often random use of capitalisation of words like “AND” in order to emphasise Rumi’s ideas. It is important to note, however, that since the subtitles follow closely the Japanese script, Rumi’s lower position towards Tadokoro—which exists in the Japanese text—is maintained in the subtitles, whilst in the dubbing she is perhaps slightly more assertive than in the Japanese text. This however, is the only case in which this happens.

Rumi, as I have explained in the previous sections, speaks in a feminine, formal manner most of the time, using words such as *sumimasen* instead of *sumanai*. She also uses highly-feminine SFPs such as *-nano*, e.g. in Scene 05. Rumi is a special case, though, thanks to her complete meltdown. Once she dresses up as if she were Mima and attacks her, she starts speaking in an even more feminine manner, and in a juvenile one as well. Since Rumi has completely lost her mind and thinks she is Mima the *idol*, not only are her mannerisms and body language that of a young adult—she moves her hands a lot, as if she were singing—but her tone reverts mentally to Mima’s age group. Rumi normally uses standard language, but when she loses her mind, she starts using more juvenile SFPs (e.g. *nandayo*) instead of what she would commonly say (e.g. *desu*). In the subtitled version of this scene, the subtitles do not reflect Rumi’s “reversion” to *idol*-like language. The dubbing does take this into account, however, and modulates Rumi’s voice, raising its pitch as well as adding an echo to her voice.

Rumi also speaks in a motherly tone when explaining the blog to Mima, as if Mima were a child who does not understand certain concepts—in this case, the internet. The subtitles and dubbing, however, do not capture this motherly tone. This is particularly noticeable in the dubbing, and my impression is that in the dubbing, Rumi sounds more

annoyed at Mima's inability to understand the internet, than approaching her ignorance with motherly patience.

When Rumi attempts to kill Mima, she uses standard versions of 2PP, saying *anata* instead of the more familiar 2PP such as *kimi*, but this distance does not exist in the dubbing. The scene is one of extreme tension, with Mima in danger of being killed by a deranged Rumi. Overall, with the exception of this particular scene, Rumi is not overtly feminine in the subtitles nor dubbing, unlike her representation in the Japanese script.

5.4. Me-Mania

Me-Mania has only a few lines in the film, but analysing him still yields significant data. Me-Mania speaks in a masculine manner, but not in an overtly masculine one (like Tadokoro does), as he uses the 1PP *boku* ("I" or "me"), instead of the stronger option, *ore*. As I have explained previously, he uses the 2PP *omae* towards Mima when he attempts to rape her. This *omae* is used in a completely deprecatory manner. Since Me-Mania is extremely "disappointed with Mima's actions", he talks to her in a patronising manner, as if he were a father reprimanding her for her actions. Of course, all the cultural baggage that comes with the usage of *omae* is difficult or nearly impossible to capture. Hence, Me-Mania's extremely derogatory manner of speaking towards Mima in the Japanese version is not reflected in the English translation.

The subtitles try to capture the scene's tension by using excessive capitalisation, peppering words like "YOUR" and "PRETENDING" with all capital letters. This fails to accurately convey how Me-Mania is putting Mima down. In this case, it could be said that the verbal language is unnecessary: The images are conveying all the basic information, as it

is quite clear that Me-Mania is attacking Mima; however, the specific words said in the Japanese text by both Mima and Me-Mania are culturally loaded, important to analyse, but difficult to translate, as the dubbing and subtitling fail to convey the distance Mima wants to take from Me-Mania, and the abusive manner in which Me-Mania refers to Mima.

5.5. Rei and Yukiko:

Mima's former *idol*-mates Rei and Yukiko speak in a very adolescent, feminine manner throughout the film, using phrases like *kebbo-kebbo*, as well as the highly-feminine SFP *-monnyo*. Their informal exchanges in the subtitles and dubbing utilise a slightly teenage language with words such as "like" and "totally". They speak in a highly-female manner in the Japanese text, but not in the subtitles or dubbing.

5.6. The fans:

Last but not least, the fans (*wota*) speak in an archetypical manner, with highly-masculine 1PPs such as *ore*. When the fans speak to each other, they use the language of a group of friends hanging out, making the setting very informal. In the dubbing, this is reflected by the elongation of sounds (e.g. "Maaaaan"), and the use of fillers such as "like" (e.g. "That's like way too expensive!"). The sound elongation is not reflected in the subtitles, but the use of the filler "like" is included, and in addition the subtitles also include the informal contraction "coz" instead of "because". In this case, the tenor of the scene is preserved, as well as the original gender portrayals of the Japanese film, i.e. of the fans' masculinity. The subtitles reflect this through the use of words like "man" and expressions such as "oh, yeah [...]", but these, as in the dubbing, do not reflect the extremely masculine

tone that the characters are using. It simply captures the informal nature of the conversation. As a result, in the translation these characters are less masculine than in the original Japanese script.

Conclusions

My analysis of *Perfect Blue* and the differences between its two translated versions has led me to the following conclusions.

My first finding is that the official subtitles of *Perfect Blue* provide a close rendering of the original Japanese script. From the standpoint of the translation of gender, the subtitles do not translate some of the nuances that make Mima a strong female character in the Japanese script, e.g. use of imperative forms, standard—not feminine—1PPs, neutral SFPs, as well as the feminine SFPs when she wants to assert herself. Kon chose to make Mima speak in a particular way, to have a specific *yakuwarigo*, as he wanted to demonstrate Mima's evolution as a person, from *idol* to actress. This evolution in Mima's personality, and her way of speaking, is not shown in either the subtitles or dubbing.

This happens with other characters as well. Rumi speaks in a standard manner when she is cogent (e.g. using neutral forms of verbs) and in a girlish, feminine manner when she becomes deranged (e.g. with the use of more feminine SFPs). Tadokoro speaks in a stereotypically masculine manner (e.g. with SFPs like *-zo*). Me-Mania is moderately masculine in his speech (e.g. using 1PPs such as "*boku*") despite his androgyny—visually speaking—as a character, and refers pejoratively to Mima by using *omae*. These strong feminine and masculine qualities of the characters are not expressed by the subtitles. The subtitles write specific, important words in capital letters (e.g. "*SLUT!*" for Phantom Mima), which help emphasise the attitudes characters may have towards one another, whether this concerns Mima's response to her rowdy fans, or Me-Mania's abuse towards Mima during his attempted rape. The subtitles, however, do *not* portray a weaker Mima, meaning that the

feminist message Kon wanted to transmit is maintained in the subtitles, even if it is not as strong as in the Japanese script.

Last, but not least, I found that the characters in the dubbing employ a stronger language, and harsher words, towards each other. This can be observed in the scene where Phantom Mima treats Mima in an extremely harsh manner compared to the Japanese script, calling her a slut, a phrase she does not use in the Japanese version. The dubbing is more mindful of the nature of each scene, taking care to convey a message not only through what is said, but also by how it is said. Mima, for instance, is portrayed as a strong character throughout the film, with the tone of her voice accurately reflecting the intended linguistic meaning of her words (e.g. if Mima is angry, she sounds angry in the dubbing as well). Rumi is more inconsistent in this regard, as her tone varies from scene to scene. In the Japanese script, for example, she often behaves with a motherly touch in her interactions with Mima, yet she frequently sounds condescending in the dubbing. Rumi also uses more tag questions in the dubbing, as she follows the rules of how women are expected to speak both in Japanese and English (Hiramoto 2013).

In this thesis I set out to examine how the portrayals of gender in the film *Perfect Blue* were translated. Thus, I sought to analyse these portrayals through the use of SFPs, 1PPs and 2PPs, as these linguistic markers are heavily gendered in the Japanese language (Hiramoto 2013). What I discovered is that the script by Kon and Murai makes subtle shifts in the way the film's characters use these linguistic markers, and these are not taken into account in the translation. For example, when Mima goes from using moderately-feminine 1PPs and SFPs to neutral or ones, these shifts are not reflected in the subtitles and dubbing. I thought that

there would be more to these linguistic markers in the English translation, but the fine distinctions Kon uses are absent in English.

Hence, I believe that when translating anime from Japanese into other languages, it is crucial to take into account the characters' use of these 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs. It is also critical that the translation remain consistent with the specific social context (the role and distance between characters) of a particular scene. Japanese is a gendered language, to the extent that the specific use of a 1PP, 2PPs or SFP can determine a character's status in respect to the other. By minding the significance of these nuances when translating, the translator can convey a more accurate (or "inaccurate", depending on what the translator is aiming for) translation in the same constrained space. The study of how that is achieved is not the focus of this research, but it is certainly a topic that deserves to be examined.

I do not, however, believe that the subtitles and dubbings provide poor translations. It is notable that the translations do not severely alter the meaning of the Japanese script. This is a fundamental success in execution, as translations often unintentionally alter the meaning of the original text. Scholars of gender and audiovisual translation have long observed this problem in translation: The gender aspects of the characters are often manipulated to serve the interests of the country or culture where the product is disseminated. Bianchi's (2008) study of the dubbing of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* in Italy, Feral's (2011) examination of the subtitles and dubbing of *Sex and the City* in France, as well as Chagnon's (2016) study of the dubbing of *Queer as Folk* and *The L Word* in Québec all show how an audiovisual product can be manipulated to serve the hegemonic ideals of masculinity or femininity of a specific place and time. Hence, in the case of *Perfect Blue*, even if the subtitles and dubbings do not completely reflect or take into account the specific 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs of the *yakuwarigo* in

the Japanese script, the fact that the translations are a close rendition of the script means that Kon's feminist message remains undiluted and unchanged.

Kon encoded a feminist message into *Perfect Blue*, one that criticises how Japanese society treats women as objects for consumption, particularly *idols*. The scriptwriters, Kon Satoshi and Murai Sadayuki, decided to give Mima and the other characters in *Perfect Blue* a specific *yakuwarigo* that would communicate to Japanese viewers the characters' positions in Japanese society and in respect to each other. Mima's *yakuwarigo* is one that does not follow the stereotypical language of a female character in anime. Kon and Murai wanted to push a specific feminist message not only in the film's images and script, but also in the language employed by its main character, Kirigoe Mima.

For Hiramoto (2013, 75) anime is a pop cultural phenomena that usually "follows hegemonic norms", and despite Scott's (2010) claim that the work of Kon Satoshi actually reproduces the stereotypes seen in anime, my research has shown that Kon actually created strong female characters that do not follow the hegemonic norms. Kon uses the male gaze in the film—by showing how Mima is consumed by her fans—to criticise the gaze itself, as well as the *wota* who consume the *idols* and the female body as if it were mere merchandise to be sold, exchanged and repackaged.

In addition, Mima herself is a strong and independent character, something that goes against the format and formula (Gitlin 1979) and the language used by the majority of female characters in anime. Mima—and the film's other characters—are not part of the "character stock" that Gitlin (1979, 260) refers to in his work. They are different personages that transmit Kon's encoded message, which is an acid, grating criticism of Japan's strong patriarchal norms and social pressures. Kon goes against the masculine hegemony rampant in

anime and Japanese society, and even though *Perfect Blue* was released in 1997, the issues that Kon criticises in his film still persist in Japan today. Kon's gender portrayals—and the encoded criticisms—are maintained in the translation, and reinforced through the film's images. As a result, Kon's critique of Japanese society and *idol* culture remains intact in the translation, and I can only hope that both Japanese and English-speaking audiences revisit this film, and “reflect” on the issues Kon wanted to address.

Further Areas of Development

The field of Japanese Studies is full of opportunities, with plenty of research possibilities in the translation and the critical analysis of gender portrayals in anime, manga and videogames. Considering that 60% of the animation in the world is made in Japan (Goto-Jones 2009, 3), it is surprising that anime is not approached in a more critical manner, especially with regards to its portrayals of gender and the role this media has in their dissemination. It is important to study how anime is translated, and the effect translations can have on the expansion of Japan's hegemonic ideals of masculinity, and how—as well as who—distributes these translations.

The use of 1PPs, 2PPs and SFPs in Japanese is a fascinating topic that has barely been touched on, as only Hiramoto (2013) and this work have dealt with these issues. More study and guidance on how to translate the linguistic subtleties of the Japanese language would be beneficial to both scholars and companies.

Finally, the area of “the voice” in translation studies is a topic that is deserving of much attention, as there is little work about it. The subtleties of “the grain of the voice”, and the role of the voice in the portrayal of characters in audiovisual products, is an area ripe for study.

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Appendices

1.0. Perfect Blue's staff (Japanese credits). Taken from the storyboard collection.

映画
[PERFECT BLUE]
スタッフクレジット

【原作】
竹内義和

【プロデューサー】
中垣ひとみ
石原恵久
東野 豊
丸山正雄
井上博明

【原案】
霧越未麻：岩男潤子
ルミ：松本梨香
田所：辻 親八
内田：大倉正章
手嶋：秋元羊介
渋谷：塩屋 翼
桜木：堀 秀行
恵利：篠原恵美
村野：江原正士
監督：染田清之
矢田：古澤 徹
レイ：新山志保
響子：古川恵実子

原 画 染
三木真一郎
山野 井 仁
山野 恵
長嶋高士
陶山 敏 央
細井 浩
逢坂 幸一
本井えみ
保志総一郎
谷山 紀 章

司会者：ショッカー0野
観客：ショッカー0野
& ロフトプラスワンブラザーズ
特別出演：北野 誠
南かおり

【脚本】
村井さだゆき

【キャラクター原案】
江口寿史

【キャラクターデザイン】
浜洲英喜
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江口寿史

【キャラクターデザイン】
浜洲英喜
今 敏

【作画監督】
浜洲英喜

【作画】
森田宏幸
栗尾昌宏
藤田しげる
新井浩一
川名久美子
二村秀樹
多田雅治
中山勝一
本田 雄
鈴木美千代
松原秀典
黒沢 守
橋本晋治
山田 誠
高秀国男
新川信正
堺和 等
浜崎博嗣
新留俊哉
野田卓雄
高橋しんや
仲 盛文
磯 光雄
高梨 光
北野コシヒロ
山下高明
古賀 誠

【原画】
森田宏幸
栗尾昌宏
藤田しげる
新井浩一
川名久美子
二村秀樹
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高橋しんや
仲 盛文
磯 光雄
高梨 光
北野コシヒロ
山下高明
古賀 誠

【動画チェック】
大島明子
梅岡 徹
坂詰かよ

【作画】
石井久美
隈崎幸治
川合正剛
渡辺佐紀子
高坂 清
馬場あゆみ
川合正起
末永 愛

【D-R MOVIE】
柳 京我
金 文 裕
金 錦 樹
文 美 任
李 知 恩
朴 善 達
金 敬 子
金 容 植
【京江動画】
文 玉 潤
金 文 裕
権 五 郎
水 銀 珠

【色彩設計】
橋本 賢

【監修】
大野春恵
中山佳奈
山本智子
角本百合子
鎌田千賀子
林田 瑠 子
【D-R MOVIE】
羅 美 愛
朴 容 慶
李 順 榮
金 喜 四
廉 恩 京
申 京 花
【京江動画】
曹 永 心
金 香 子
蔡 貞 任
郭 美 徳

【美術監督】
池 信 孝

【作画】
上原伸一
猪田 薫
池田 尚
河野 寿
番野雅好
太田 大
朴 謙一
金 哲 圭
鷲崎 博
谷口淳一
吉原一輔
加藤幸子
山本二三
池田祐二
Team's ART

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加藤幸子
山本二三
池田祐二
Team's ART

【特殊効果】
真田祥子
ビジュアルワークショップ

【撮影】
【スタジオコスモス】
大藤哲生
池上元秋
前原勝則
黒田洋一
野口博志
池上伸治
龍島高久
島田隆志
久野利和
古澤功一
矢澤昌二
平野加奈絵
宮田一美
栗倉正文
西山朋宏

【特殊効果】
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ビジュアルワークショップ

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島田隆志
久野利和
古澤功一
矢澤昌二
平野加奈絵
宮田一美
栗倉正文
西山朋宏

【撮影】
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前田庸生
大常昌文

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松尾 衛

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早川光相

【音楽】
幾見雅博 (OFFICE193)

【音楽プロデューサー】
芳藤 徹 (ケイノスタジオ)

【音楽A&Rプロデューサー】
堀 正明 (アインスタジオ)

【エンディングテーマ】
「SEASON」
作詞：小竹正人
作曲：PIPELINE PROJECT
編曲：PIPELINE PROJECT
歌： M-VOICE

【挿入歌】
「愛の天使」
作詞：今井寿子
作曲：幾見雅博
編曲：幾見雅博
歌： MISA
古川恵実子
清水美恵

「一人でも平気」
作詞：六ツ見純代
作曲：三井 誠
編曲：幾見雅博
歌： 古川恵実子
清水美恵

「思い出に抱かれて今は」
作詞：This Time
作曲：This Time
編曲：幾見雅博
歌： MISA

【編曲】
IZUMI

【編集】
尾形治敏

【ネガ編集】
伊藤勇喜子
寺内 聡

【音響監督】
三間雅文

【効果】
倉橋静男

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マッドハウス
ONIRO

【監修】
今 敏

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上野未栄

【音響制作担当】
高寺 雄

【録音スタジオ】
アオイスタジオ

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【制作進行】
成田歳法
鈴木智子
平井健治郎

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岡本晃一 (デルマックス)
竹内義和 (デルマックス)

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大友克洋
樋口敏雄
内藤 篤 (内藤・清水法律事務所)

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小島朋子 (ザナドゥー)
山口 賢 (一広)
豊島由紀子 (一広)
内田大五 (クリエイティブ)
飛松隆幸
柏田 等 (ファンクス)

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鶴身唯一

【制作総括】
鷲谷 健

【制作】
マッドハウス
ONIRO

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上野未栄

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東京現像所

【CGIプロジェント】
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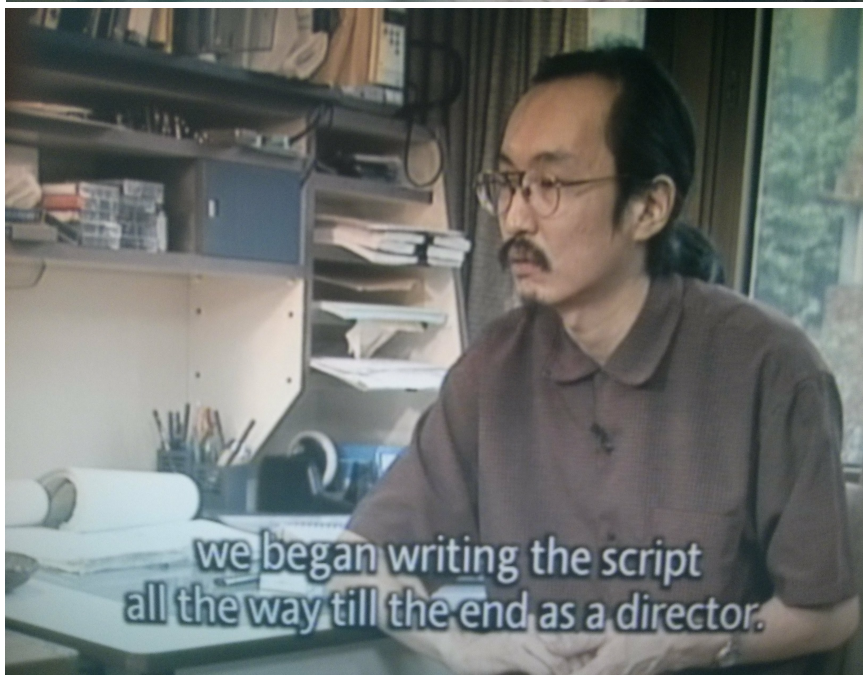
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松尾 衛

【制作担当】
早川光相

2.0. Screenshot's from *Perfect Blue*'s DVD extras in which Kon states he worked on the script.



3.0. Scene comparison between Kon's *Perfect Blue* and Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream* (2000).

