

**Title:**

From the 'cinematic' to the 'anime-ic':

Issues of movement in anime

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**BIOG:** Caroline Ruddell is Lecturer in Film and Television at St. Mary's University College, Twickenham, London. She has written on witchcraft in popular television with a focus on the use of speech, magical text and identity, and on issues of identity in anime. Her research interests include the representation of identity and subjectivity in film/television, anime and animation studies, and film/television theory and methodology. Caroline is a member of the editorial boards for *Animation Studies: Online Journal for Animation History and Theory* and *Watcher Junior: The Undergraduate Journal of Buffy Studies*.

**Abstract:** This article explores the way that movement is formally depicted in anime. Drawing on Thomas Lamarre's concepts of the 'cinematic' and the 'anime-ic', the article interrogates further the differences in movement and action in anime from traditional filmic form. While often considered in terms of 'flatness' anime offers spectacle, character development and, ironically, depth through the very form of movement put to use in such texts. The article questions whether the modes of address at work in anime are unique to this form of animation. Taking into account how the terms 'cinematic' and 'anime-ic' can be understood (and by extension the cinematic and animatic apparatus) the article also begins to explore how viewers might identify with such images.

**Keywords:** anime, movement, 'liveness', cinematic, anime-ic, suture.

## **From the 'cinematic' to the 'anime-ic':**

### **Issues of movement in anime**

#### **Introduction**

This article explores the representation of movement in anime through an expansion of Thomas Lamarre's concepts of the 'cinematic' and the 'anime-ic' (2002b: 330-342)<sup>i</sup>. Lamarre's arguments provide a model, or framework, which importantly allows for theorizing the specific qualities of movement afforded in anime. Lamarre's theorisation of the relation between the 'cinematic' and the 'anime-ic' proves a useful idea to address movement in anime where he discusses how movement is 'recoded' or 'recomposed' in anime. For Lamarre, anime tends to provide an alternate possibility for movement, for the 'live', that is usually thought of as being represented in live-action in a 'superior' way (2002b: 332). Anime is often associated with a particular style and/or a mode of address, some of which will be explored in this article. Such style is, as Lamarre suggests, inseparable from how anime represents movement. What is also problematic here is that much of anime is configured as longer running television shows; not all anime is in feature film format and this in itself problematizes the 'cinematic' quality of anime even further. Television is a more 'interrupted' form than film and often equated with 'liveness'. While there are many feature length anime films that are popular worldwide there are also many anime television shows produced in Japan and increasingly available globally (particularly in the format of DVD), one example of which shall be discussed here. To what extent then is anime, and

more specifically, anime-ic movement 'disruptive', or 'interruptive', as a form of the moving image? Such an argument takes into account how far anime departs from being 'cinematic' and allows for further understanding of the modes of address in this form of animation, as well as other media, which depart from formal and traditional cinematic techniques.

In a 2002 edition of *Japan Forum* several critics discuss varying ways to critically approach anime; the underlying theme of this issue is how anime interacts with cinema, or the cinematic. Lamarre makes the point that he has no wish to provide definitions for (the) cinema(tic), anime(-ic) and animation, as he is more interested in the relation between them (2002a: 186). Any attempt to provide complete definitions for these terms does indeed seem rash, and yet it also seems problematic to leave them hovering as objects with a chain of unchallenged connotations attached. Following Lamarre in an attempt to understand how anime often represents (recodes) movement, this article takes up the term anime-ic as a particular quality of movement and non-movement, with the aim of moving towards fuller understanding of what might differentiate anime from the cinematic, and conversely what might tie them together.

Traditionally, and I do not wish to be too categorical or exhaustive here, the cinematic relates to the construction of space and frame using classical film making techniques such as pov shots, shot-reverse-shot etc. Prominently linear narratives are usually based on character development related to cause and

effect, and the continuity system constructs a 'seamless' chain of events that allows viewers to focus on story and character. Spectacle is also a concept often discussed in relation to more recent mainstream live-action filmmaking, particularly Hollywood (see Geoff King [2002] for example), although increasingly spectacle afforded through special effects leans on animation in the form of CGI. Granted, this is perhaps a limited understanding of what might constitute elements of the cinematic and yet it does offer a foothold, or point of departure, to begin an exploration of how other forms of media might depart from traditional film form. The anime-ic can be understood as the (de)construction of space and time within the frame often disrupting viewer perception of events through particular interruptions of movement and the liveness of the text.

The following analysis focuses on the way that anime departs from the cinematic in its anime-ic representations of movement and concomitantly modes of address in relation to narrative, character and spectacle. The analysis which follows is an interpretation of the series *InuYasha* (Naoya Aoki, Yasunao Aoki, 2000-2004, Japan) based on the formal qualities at work in the show. I shall also draw on aspects of subject-position theory and the concept of suture, as I intend to show that such aspects of Grand Theory<sup>ii</sup> have their uses through taking into account how differing modes of address are likely to affect how viewers are sutured or 'sewn' into anime narratives. It is not my intention here to delve into the detailed theoretical debates that have informed film and animation studies as it is far beyond the scope of this article. However it is important to bear in mind

contentious attitudes towards factions of theory as this article hopes to demonstrate that close interpretive attention to the text allows for an understanding of the differing modes of address at work in anime, as well as the differing industry contexts involved. The idea of theorising subjectivity, and subject-position, (in its many forms) has been much debated in film studies. It seems timely here to introduce this in relation to textual issues and modes of address in both animation and visual culture generally, which will be the focus of the latter part of this article. It is necessary to turn firstly to Lamarre to provide some brief clarification on anime terminology and concepts that are the basis for his arguments.

### **Flatness, weightlessness and the still**

As Lamarre notes the 'flat' quality associated with anime, due to its largely 2D format, is often equated with a lack of character depth or weight (2002b: 333). Anime gives the impression of 'flatness' through the moving of foreground and background images, something increasingly replaced by 3D animation in many contemporary examples (2002a: 183-184). Lamarre argues that linking anime with art is one way to avoid negative connotations, for example he discusses Murakami Takashi's (2000) work on the superflat which positions anime in relation to Japanese art traditions (2002b: 333-225). Limited animation is also integral to anime aesthetics for Lamarre, which incorporates the question of movement. Limited animation takes 'short-cuts' and includes lesser frames than

full animation utilized by Disney for example. This requires a certain technique of 'reading' on behalf of the viewer, 'one that entails scanning, re-reading, searching information, discerning technical innovation and so forth' (p. 337). The anime-ic, for Lamarre, is an experience related to anime aesthetics which is positioned as flat, and limited in its scope to represent movement. For Lamarre anime is also superflat as distance is opened up between the movement of foreground and background images and in the movement of the characters (p. 339-340).

Lamarre turns to the concept of weightlessness to argue that a film like *Castle in the Sky* (Hayao Miyazaki, 1986, Japan) is both anime-ic and cinematic. As the film's narrative incorporates much flying and gliding, characters like Sheeta are often seen floating and falling through midair. Sheeta therefore defies laws of gravity and appears as weightless, something attributed to anime characters generally because they appear flat, lacking in depth and often suspended within the frame. Such a film is anime-ic because limited and largely 2D animation is at use, yet through emphasizing the weightless quality of the character through graceful floating the 'jitter' often associated with anime character movement is avoided, and therefore appears as cinematic (p. 358). It is here that I would like to shift focus from the spatial matter of flatness, which is discussed fully by Lamarre, and take into consideration the temporal matter of stillness. These concepts are distinctly intertwined as often, while a character is static in time, the background races past giving the impression of movement and spatial dimensions as well as emphasizing the flat, or depthless, quality to the

character's form. Full attention has yet to be paid to these character moments of stillness as they are a prominent feature of anime aesthetics.

*Castle in the Sky* is an intriguing example as Studio Ghibli films are often perceived as cinematic in style despite their use of limited animation, as Lamarre notes. I would like to problematise the relations between anime and cinema further by focusing on *InuYasha*, which fully utilizes limited animation techniques and is also a television series. The format of television further loosens relations between anime and the cinematic as the flow of the overall narrative is segmented into an episodic structure. Although much of Studio Ghibli's output avoids the 'jitter' associated with limited animation, many action-based anime examples make use of interruption and frozen moments, particularly in battle sequences. The following analysis of *InuYasha* is an example of one anime television series where frozen moments are made prominent regularly in fight scenes. Although the quality of movement in *InuYasha* is not common to all anime, it is worth noting here how the anime-ic is at 'work' in the series, as it is indicative of how many anime examples punctuate certain moments<sup>iii</sup>. I employ the term anime-ic here to address the jitter and disruption such frozen moments encompass.

### **Character, narrative and stillness**

In the televised anime series *InuYasha* the two central characters, Kagome and



InuYasha, battle demons in order to find the shards of a sacred jewel that Kagome is sworn to protect. This anime TV series is a fantasy-based, action-adventure show that also combines issues of romance and 'teen' problems in the narrative. Kagome must navigate her life in the Tokyo present where she attends school, dates boys and deals with family issues while also dealing with the more action-based, supernatural events that take place in the feudal past (she has access to the past through an enchanted well). In the series there are many instances where anime-ic modes of movement are at play; action scenes are slowed down through frozen images of characters in the process of soaring through the air in mid-battle. As is common in anime's print counterpart, Manga comics, characters are shown frozen, or suspended, in midair while at the same time speed of movement is impressed on the viewer as the background races past (in comics/graphic novels this is often illustrated with lines drawn behind the characters giving the impression of movement). It is here that the flat intertwines with the still as this particular quality of movement is afforded through the methods of animation at work in anime. Space and time is disrupted through stilling the foreground image of the character.

In 'The Mystery of the New Moon and the Black-Haired InuYasha'<sup>iv</sup> InuYasha reverts to his human status for one night during the new moon (he is half human, half demon). The episode highlights issues related to his character through the anime-ic qualities of movement at use in the show. It is useful to briefly chart the content of this episode as it relates to aspects of the cinematic and anime-ic,

particularly in relation to how narrative and character are constructed in the text. In the episode the characters have to battle 'spiderhead' demons and one in particular proves a formidable enemy. As InuYasha is now only human his fight against this demon is rather unequally matched and he loses only to be bitten and poisoned.

In this episode, the human (black-haired) InuYasha is 'slowed' onscreen as he battles the demon and is thrown through the air as the demon strikes him. Later, as InuYasha regains his half demon status, he is captured in motion as he attacks the demon who poisoned him. In the first instance a medium close-up image of InuYasha is shown for a few frames only while the background speeds past giving the impression that InuYasha is being thrown violently through the air by his enemy (see Figure 1). The impression of speed does not completely draw attention away from the more still image of InuYasha's character which focuses attention on his current pain and vulnerability; the protracted image of his facial expression draws the viewer to his defenselessness. Slowing the image of InuYasha, as well as omitting most of the demon's body from the frame, aligns this particular action sequence with InuYasha's emotional response to defeat as well as his physical status as vulnerably human. Later in the episode, once InuYasha has regained his supernatural powers which coincide with his half demon identity, he once again fights his enemy and wins. There are several moments in this sequence where InuYasha's body is frozen in midair<sup>v</sup>; as he wins this fight the interruption of the action sequence here points to his renewed

power (see Figure 2). The 'showcasing' of InuYasha's fighting abilities highlights a movement in the character towards his true identity of neither fully human nor fully demon where he is both vulnerable and powerful.

Much of the show's drama is based on InuYasha's status as an (anti)hero and this is often demonstrated in the battle sequences where his psychological motivation and emotions toward other characters are made prominent. A further indicative example of InuYasha's fragile status as neither human or demon appears in series two where InuYasha must fight his own brother (Sesshōmaru) who is depicted as wholly evil compared to InuYasha's hybridity. The two brothers fight over the sword (Tetsusaiga) which once belonged to their now dead father. The fight demonstrates several aspects of InuYasha's character and this is specifically related, again, to the anime-ic depiction of movement in the battle scene. InuYasha is shown as weaker compared to Sesshōmaru and frozen or slowed moments of Inuyasha in the battle draw attention once again to his vulnerability in relation to his more powerful brother. In Figure 3 InuYasha's image is stilled as the impact of his brother's strike is given prominence over all other aspects of the text. Viewers may lose all sense of spatial relations as InuYasha is isolated in the frame when he is thrown violently backwards by the force of the impact. As in the previous example the background speeds past to illustrate movement but InuYasha's stilled image is at the forefront of the frame, allowing viewers to focus on his defenselessness in the face of his brother's attack. InuYasha's dialogue over this sequence also allows viewers to focus on

his feelings and questioning of his own power. Later as he realizes his own power and manages to defeat Sesshōmaru a wider shot of InuYasha stilled in a powerful stance is played for several frames allowing viewers to focus on his victory and renewed power (see Figure 4). In both examples the wider shots correspond with InuYasha's victory. Allowing the viewer to see his bodily 'wholeness' reinforces his strength and is polarised with more close-up images that enhance his 'fractured' state when he is vulnerable.

The 'stopping', or slowing, of action within the very action sequences focuses attention less on the development of the battle than on InuYasha and his renewed powers. The spectacle of InuYasha and his abilities are made prominent over all other aspects of the narrative, even the exact events of the battle; in both instances it is not really clear how InuYasha wins as he often shown 'isolated' in the frame rendering an understanding of spatial relationships to other characters rather difficult (evident in Figures 1 to 4). Moments of stillness therefore have a problematic relation to both narrative development and spatial relations (which is linked to the 'flat'); it is instances such as these in the series, where characters are frozen in mid-action, that divert attention away from aspects such as narrative development and instead urge viewers to focus on the emotional and psychological implications of the characters' actions as well as the spectacle that is arguably present in the suspension of characters mid-flight. These examples of 'disruption' in the episode relate to anime-ic qualities of representation in the series and although these moments interrupt the action

sequences and narrative, arguably viewers are 'anchored' to the text as these still, or slow moments emphasize aspects of character development or emotion. It is the anime-ic expression of movement that allows for highlighting InuYasha's characteristics in light of his hybrid nature as well as commenting on his emotional and psychological mindset.

Significantly, freezing InuYasha in the frame usually punctuates either violence used against him or his ability to defeat others. Whether he is flying through the air from the impact of another's attack or whether he is drawing himself up for retaliation, sword at the ready, a sense of weight and depth is afforded to his character through the impression of these forces at work. When InuYasha is struck and forced back, still and fragmented within the frame, the power of the hit is evident both in his facial expression and in the still image juxtaposed with the swiftly moving background. The effect of powerful forces against InuYasha is articulated through slowing his image against the rapid background and this gives his character a sense of bodily weight and gravitas despite being shown in flat 2D format.

For Philip Brophy anime visually represents unseen forces and energy as '*anime* exploits the dynamism of movement to affect directly the physical world' (2007: 191) [italics in original]. Characters' psychological states are commented on through visualizing energy and internal forces (p. 191), yet in *InuYasha* it is stilled images of both his face and body that make psychological interiority exterior.

Stilling his image also allows viewers the time to appreciate the artwork of anime characters (this is particularly poignant for viewers outside of Japan who may not have had as much access to anime historically). Although the 'flatness' of the images in anime is most certainly present in the movement between foreground and background, a more rounded sense of character development and depth can be afforded InuYasha because these moments are a comment on his hybrid nature of neither human or demon, as both vulnerable and potent.

The representation of InuYasha in the series puts him on display. This is not completely unlike the voyeurism attached to the interrupted narrative of Laura Mulvey's classical cinema where the female image breaks the flow of the story (1989). Although in *InuYasha* it is not just his body as spectacle that is put on show, which is the case with Mulvey's female stars. InuYasha's psychological doubts and victories are clearly overlaid with his fragmented image or his bodily wholeness, which is made possible through slowing the images and suspending his image. Freezing his facial and bodily image through anime-ic qualities of movement may perhaps interrupt the liveness of the text, or the flow of the images, but ironically the anime-ic here increases our understanding of InuYasha's strengths, weaknesses and his character psychology: his liveness. He has mind and body, depth and weight, whereas Mulvey's lingering female images have only body.

## **Spectacle and liveness: movement in anime**

The study of animation has frequently come back to the concept of the 'live', which is specifically related to the representation of movement (and non-movement) in animated texts. Alan Cholodenko writes: '...two major definitions bedevil animation: endowing with *life*...and endowing with *movement*' (1991: 15) (italics in original)<sup>vi</sup>. In animation 'things' that should be inanimate are not; they are brought to life through a wealth of techniques such as puppetry, cel, CGI etc. Modes of movement are therefore a core element of animation studies. Non-movement in animation has also been addressed in some instances. For example, the theorisation of the uncanny is related to the effects of the inanimate, although this is often applied to more experimental uses of animation such as the Quay Brothers (for example see Heather Crow, 2006). Cholodenko's discussion of still photography also acknowledges that non-movement is central to understanding animation. For Cholodenko 'the question of the "still"' is essentially a 'question of animation' (2005: 5).

At the Pervasive Animation event held in March 2007 Esther Leslie addressed the concept of the still in a discussion of bullet-time animation and computer graphics in more mainstream live-action texts such as *The Day After Tomorrow* (Roland Emmerich, 2004, USA). For Leslie, these examples of still moments draw attention and highlight the magic and possibility often associated with the use of animation (CGI) (2007). Equally, these frozen instances underscore and problematize the concept of the live in the moving image; for example, the use of

bullet-time in a mainstream film like *The Matrix* (Andy & Larry Wachowski, 1999, Aus/USA) interrupts space and time, punctuates action/fight sequences, and places aesthetics and spectacle over and above other aspects of the text. The use of non-movement (afforded through animation) breaks up the linearity of narrative and can be understood as disrupting liveness in the text. Disruption of movement and action perhaps attract viewer attention to the kinds of processes that may have gone into the production of the film and this potentially breaks, or suspends, the seamless continuity system usually deployed in live-action mainstream film and television (to be explored further below).

Similar to Hollywood blockbusters an anime series such as *InuYasha* frequently interrupts the liveness of the text through frozen moments like the ones described above. Commenting on character psychology through anime-ic movement is more pronounced in anime than in film examples such as *The Matrix*. However, the stylistics at work in anime, and specifically modes of movement and non-movement (the anime-ic) deployed in many of these texts, are, in some ways, similar to the use of animation (CGI) in live-action cinema. Here moments of spectacle are highlighted through slow motion or shown several times from different angles.

*The Matrix* highlights spectacle in the action sequences which is specifically related to the showcasing of special effects; such action sequences are firmly integrated into, in this case, a fairly in-depth narrative. This is not dissimilar to the



way that spectacle is deployed in many examples of anime, where action may be stilled or slowed but such sequences are also integrated within narratives. Both examples highlight the magic and possibility associated with animation (in its varying forms) but both live-action and anime usually incorporate these moments into narrative arcs with attention given to character inter and intra-relations.

Where differences can be noted is, as suggested, largely in the 'flat' quality of the images associated with anime but also in the potentially disruptive still moments where action and movement within aspects of the frame comes to a halt (although not unheard of 'stopping' rather than 'slowing' is relatively rare in mainstream live-action film and television, although certainly there are similarities with the use of bullet-time effects and certain film techniques such as the freeze-frame)<sup>vii</sup>. An example such as bullet-time is distinctly 3D, and yet the quality of movement in both bullet-time and anime is also similar in many ways, largely through allowing audiences time to appreciate the spectacle of the effect and indeed to identify with character motivation. In Neo's battles in *The Matrix* he is slowed through bullet-time effects which impresses his power as The One upon the viewer. Much like InuYasha's victories he is showcased through particular modes of movement in (CGI) animation. Could it therefore be argued, if the term anime-ic can be understood as the freezing of time common to anime, that a film like *The Matrix* is anime-ic in its use of bullet-time? Relations between the cinematic and the anime-ic grow ever more murky in such a line of thought, a point to which I shall return.

Disrupting the movement of InuYasha's character breaks the flow of the images usually associated with a cinematic seamless chain of events. The liveness of the text is suspended as he stops within the frame, and this impacts on how viewers read his status and motivations. In relation to the cinematic qualities of this anime series, these are present through aspects such as generic traits and conventions, as well as some borrowing of formal qualities associated with mainstream filmmaking such as the construction of space (in some instances) through choice of shot, framing etc. Anime-ic aspects are evident in the representation of movement which cannot be detached from the particular style of anime and the context of the Japanese animation industry in relation to limited animation, yet as noted similarities are also evident in other forms of live-action filmmaking. It is, therefore, through a movement between the anime-ic and the cinematic that the series addresses its viewers<sup>viii</sup>. In a sense, it is the subjectivity of the characters in the show that is foregrounded through the deployment of movement, non-movement and action. The modes of address in anime call for a questioning of how viewers interact with anime and the kinds of identifications that may be at work.

### **Suture and anime**

In a series such as *InuYasha* a complex mode of address is afforded through a constant movement between the cinematic and the anime-ic. The concept of

suture, that has been theorized in relation to live-action traditional filmmaking, is useful here in addressing how viewers are likely to interact with a text that is arguably disruptive through its representation of movement and action. 'Stitching' viewers into texts traditionally relies on the seamless quality with which many mainstream moving image examples depict space, time, narrative events and characters within the frame, allowing 'positions' for spectators to occupy (Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis, 1992: 169). Surely then, the 'disruptive' qualities of anime suggest that viewers are not sutured into the text in quite the same way, or in a more general way, asked to identify in different ways. Problematizing the movement, or liveness, of the text through anime-ic modes of address perhaps asks viewers to 'step back' from narrative progression. Viewers are, instead, offered spectacle and innovative representations of movement which comment on a character's psychology and mindset.

The theorisation of how spectators are sutured into examples of the moving image traditionally relies on the concept that cinema works as an apparatus, as a mechanism that through its modes of address allows viewers to suspend disbelief<sup>ix</sup>. However, there is perhaps a problem in applying the cinematic apparatus to animation generally, Stam, Burgoyne and Flitterman-Lewis suggest that through various mechanisms 'the cinematic institution work[s] to create in viewers [...] a belief in the impression of reality offered by its fictions' (1992: 142). The problem here lies in the 'impression of reality' where arguably animation, and anime specifically here, does not give an impression of reality related to viewers'

actual perception of the world. Yet surely anime offers some form of a 'world' that viewers can identify with on some level. As Suzanne Buchan argues 'the cinematic apparatus enables movement and the experience of these drawings as a 'reality' particular to the 'region' of animation' (2006: 18).

The popularity of anime reinforces the fact that identification with the text takes place on some or many levels, and that the 'reality' particular to anime draws viewers in, which cannot be distanced from the way that anime addresses its viewers. However one views spectatorship, whether as a process whereby subjects are 'constructed' or where viewers are more active, the modes of address afforded by anime call into question how viewers may interact with the cinematic and anime-ic. In a more radical sense, perhaps anime acknowledges viewer positioning through its unique modes of address and requires a certain recognition or knowledge of how animated images might 'work' to lure viewers in.

Philip Brophy argues that in relation to animation, an '*animatic apparatus*' (rather than a cinematic apparatus) is more apt to understand the process of animation and how it relates to viewers (1991: 68) (italics in original). According to Brophy, it is 'dynamism' which is specific to an animatic apparatus, he argues:

An animatic apparatus would be a similarly generative machine of effects to that of the cinematic apparatus, but one that is interested in frames, images, cuts and parts more as events and occurrences than elements or components; attuned more to the speed and tempo of fragmentation than the formal sequencing or structural organization of fragments; concerned with film and photography more as a transition than a process; and focused on animation more as a method of

caricature than an apparition of lifelikeness. (p. 68)

Brophy's arguments allow for understanding animation in relation to events in the text rather than as a seamless structure or process. In relation to anime, Brophy provides a framework for understanding the dynamic and disruptive moments of stillness as events, but within an apparatus that arguably still works as a mechanism whereby viewers can identify with the images in the text. In one sense Brophy's comments are in line with Buchan who argues that animation demands a cinematic apparatus that cannot be 'unchanging' (2006: 25); the unique nature of animated 'worlds' calls for reevaluating how viewers are 'positioned' by the modes of address at use in animation (p. 25-30). As Buchan also notes, the unique qualities associated with animated examples bear resemblance to Tom Gunning's articulation of early cinema as a 'cinema of attractions' (p.26); animation 'attracts' in differing ways to traditional filmmaking techniques.

It is worth invoking Tom Gunning's further arguments here related to earlier accounts of cinema spectatorship where he argues against theories of spectatorship that presume a passive audience who are 'pulled in' by an all-powerful cinematic apparatus. Instead Gunning argues that viewers of (early) cinema were well equipped to decipher the 'magic' of the illusion and were active consumers of this form of entertainment (1989: 32-34). Gunning's argument is useful in understanding how spectators are likely to bring more 'knowledge' to the cultural products they encounter. Due to the global nature of popular culture

texts like anime, viewers are likely to be knowledgeable about how to 'read' many moving image examples, yet in order to identify with texts, a certain amount of identification or 'suturing' on behalf of viewers is probable.

In relation to anime, and its particular modes of address, viewers can be 'stitched' into the narrative in a rather 'traditional' sense as cinematic methods are put to use at times; however, in its anime-ic representation of movement and action (in certain sequences), viewers are more likely to be aware of the spectacle as it steps 'out of time' with any seamless sequence of events, and spatial relations. Spectacle as events, literally slowed so that we may enjoy the sheer display of innovative depictions of movement, can be understood as 'lifted' from the development of aspects such as narrative. This is not to say that viewers do not identify with the images of 'disruptive' movement; the showcasing of spectacle and animation, as well as the comment on character psychology and motivation, can provide further 'anchoring' points for viewers. The action sequences in *InuYasha* are events and occurrences, fragmented moments of speed inter-cut with stillness largely 'outside' of any component of the ongoing story. It seems therefore that once again we are in the 'in-between' of the cinematic (apparatus) and the anime-ic (or animatic) apparatus; it is probable that viewers can shift between different 'modes' of viewing, just as texts differ in their modes of address. Perhaps the viewing of anime can be understood in the sense that Cholodenko describes the animatic more generally, as being in-between cinema and animation (2007: 501).

## **Conclusion**

The popularity of anime globally suggests that it 'speaks' to viewers on a number of levels. The last section introduced how traditional understandings of the cinematic apparatus, when combined with more recent speculations on how animation may differ from such a mechanism, may be useful in beginning to theorize how viewers might engage with anime (and animation more generally). Theory of spectatorship has been criticized in film studies, notably by Bordwell and Carroll, who disparagingly place such a body of work within their bracket of Grand Theory (1996). However, an understanding of how viewers might identify with texts is useful in a move towards understanding the popularity of anime both within Japan and in a more global context. I would therefore contend that some aspects of theory, in this case the notion of an apparatus (cinematic and animatic), are useful in understanding how differing modes of address attract viewers. The 'disruptive' qualities of how movement is depicted in anime point toward viewer appreciation of spectacle and dynamic modes of address in the text as well as a focus on character development, as argued in relation to *InuYasha*. It is also through a close textual reading of anime that modes of address and formal strategies at work in the text can be thoroughly explored in relation to more traditional or mainstream understandings of how texts address their viewers. Interpreting the non-movement and disruption to the liveness of the

text opens up possibilities for understanding anime as both film/television discourses (in relation to the cinematic) as well as animation discourses (the anime-ic and the animatic).

It is between the cinematic and the anime-ic that an anime series like *InuYasha* addresses its viewers and it is likely to be between a cinematic apparatus and animatic apparatus that viewers respond to the images before them. It is worth returning to Lamarre's point that definitions of such terms are less important than the relations between them. Comparing anime with CGI examples of spectacle in live-action film blurs the distinction between these concepts, and yet through focusing on the representation of movement the terms are useful in interpreting how media texts address their viewers in a variety of ways. In the widest sense perhaps many film and animation examples (and media generally) can be understood as incorporating both anime-ic and cinematic modes of address; it then becomes a question of where on the relational line you might place certain aspects of the text. Anime is markedly flat in style, and movement is constantly interrupted by static foreground images. Yet intriguing characters, full of liveness and psychological and bodily depth, as well as the diverse modes of address at play in anime, lend it weight and substance.



## Notes

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- <sup>i</sup> Lamarre borrows the term ‘anime-ic’ from Thomas Looser (2002).
- <sup>ii</sup> See Bordwell and Carroll (1996) for their criticisms of ‘Grand Theories’. Or more recently Darley discusses some aspects of theory with scepticism (2007).
- <sup>iii</sup> See, for example, television series such as *Fullmetal Alchemist* (Seiji Mizushima, 2003-4, Japan) or *Naruto* (Hayato Date, Jeff Nimoy, 2002-7, Japan), or a film such as *X* (Rinaro, 1996, Japan)
- <sup>iv</sup> Season one, episode 13. First broadcast Japan 29 January, 2001.
- <sup>v</sup> Note that in moments where InuYasha is stilled in action, usually aspects such as his hair or clothes move. The overall impression is that of ‘stillness’ however.
- <sup>vi</sup> Several essays in Cholodenko’s edited collection deal with issues of ‘life’ and ‘movement’ in animation, for example see Hutchings (1991). Or, see Crow in relation to the uncanny (2006), or Sobchack who discusses digital animation (2006).
- <sup>vii</sup> Certain film movements, such as French New Wave, also disrupt the seamless construction of more traditional filmmaking practices.
- <sup>viii</sup> See also Aylish Wood’s essay for a detailed exploration of (cinematic) space as ‘re-animated’ through animation methods and techniques (2006).
- <sup>ix</sup> See Christian Metz (1982) for a detailed exploration of how cinema works as an apparatus based on Lacan’s concept of the ‘mirror phase’.

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