Abstract
This article aims to demonstrate how exactly Thomas Lamarre reads movement, plot, and characters in The Anime Machine (2009), as defined to an extent, yet not completely determined by the concept of the animetic machine. Mimicking the first part of Lamarre’s book, it approaches Miyazaki’s last work, The Wind Rises (Kaze tachinu, 2013). What Lamarre sees in Miyazaki’s manga eiga is a new way of gaining “a free relation to technology” as idealized by Heideggerian philosophy, but, of course, “in animation” (Lamarre 62). This free, critical relation seems to be most noticeably depicted in Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind (Kaze no tani no Naushika, 1984) and Castle in the Sky (Tenkû no shiro Rapyûta, 1986). But does the same kind of criticality that Lamarre finds in Miyazaki’s prior works also apply to the latest one, and if so, to what extent? This again leads to the question whether the conclusions Lamarre arrives at actually capture the critical potential of his theory. In the discussion of these issues, anime is viewed not as a text, but a hub of interrelations, including those between audience groups. Finally, the argumentation arrives at the plurality favored by the medium itself, suggested by Lamarre himself, but not ultimately prioritized.

Keywords
animetism/cinematism, anime research, Heideggerian philosophy of technology, media studies, structures of movement and depth

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Published in 2009, The Anime Machine by Thomas Lamarre has been comprehensively reviewed. The reviewers generally agree about the theoretical depth and value of the book with regard to studies of various media. To put it briefly, Lamarre successfully employs critical theories in order to build a media theory of animation through exploring the intricate relationship between technology and Japanese anime. He resorts to various influential texts from film studies and philosophy, along with those from gender studies and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Yet, he has a special place for also disconnecting anime from such fields by focusing on its specificity, discussing types of movement and structures of depth in particular.

The introduction sets the main goal of the work as discovering “how anime thinks technology” (Lamarre xi), based on the assertion that “animation at once works with technology and thinks about technology—and the two processes are inseparable” (xxx). Trying to go beyond historical and technological determinism, which settle down to explain every single aspect of any text depending on a certain period or device respectively, Lamarre puts the animation stand in the center of his reading, but with a twist. Approaching it as the “multiplanar animetic machine” (xxvi), he regards it as a site of underdetermination. This concept brings together multiplanar images (resulting from the combination of multiple layers of drawings on top of each other), animetic movement (the type of lateral movement favored by the animation stand), and Félix Guattari’s concept of machine (a nodal point where abstract and concrete elements like drawings, camera, and artists’ contributions are brought together). Thus, Lamarre’s “animetic machine” becomes a space for unforeseen interaction within the materiality of animation, and it neither ignores cultural influences that find their ways into anime, nor does it allow for cultural readings to ignore the medium’s materiality.

Revolving around the main idea of the “animetic interval,” or the “movement between planes of the image” (Lamarre 7), the first part of the book focuses on Hayao Miyazaki’s animations and draws parallels to Heidegger’s phenomenology. The second and third parts are linked through the notion of “exploded projection,” which is defined as the “quasi-orthogonal structural ‘explosion’ of elements across the image surface” (122). While Hideaki Anno’s animations are paired up with post-Heideggerian theories (by Hiroki Azuma, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida) in the former part, the latter pairs up Chobits (both the manga and its adaptation to anime) by CLAMP with theories of Lacanian thinkers (such as Tamaki Saito and Slavoj Žižek). Impressive in its philosophical intensity, the monograph stands out due to its painstaking attention to the surprisingly neglected material conditions underlying anime production and reception.

However, The Anime Machine does not go without criticism either. Although few in number, among the observations worth mentioning, one appeared in a journal...
of interdisciplinary comics studies. In his review, after summarizing Lamarre's intentions, Caleb Simmons asserts that:

> the pragmatic implications of his novel theory of the animetic process' are mooted by his assumption that the abstract machine, like the scientific method, exists objectively and unadulterated by various other influences, which are folded into the animetic machine from its inception. (Simmons)

Indeed, putting the anime machine consciously or unconsciously in an isolated, transcendental position is a pitfall, for no matter how unpredictable the process of production might be, with an unalterable, time-defying core, there is a risk of ending up in determinism again. Yet, in Lamarre's defense, it can be argued that as long as the machine is also seen as a site of innovation, for example through its encounters with computer technologies pointed out in the same book, risks of determinism can be minimized. This line of thinking might clarify one possible inconsistency in *The Anime Machine* on the level of theory, but how about the level of application? In his review, Simmons claims also that “Lamarre is at his best when he is putting his theory into practice exploring the movement and spacing within animation in chapters four to twenty-two” and thus opposes the immanent danger in terms of theory to its skillful application (Simmons). Deviating from his stance, in the scope of this article, I intend to put the latter, namely the way Lamarre applies his theory to particular works, under scrutiny. My first aim is to demonstrate how he reads movement, plot, and characters as defined to an extent, yet not completely determined by his animetic machine. In order to reach this aim, I would like to take a rather lengthy look at Miyazaki’s last work, mimicking the perspective of the first part of Lamarre’s book. Released four years after the publication of *The Anime Machine*, I believe that *The Wind Rises* (*Kaze Tachinu*, 2013) provides a fresh point of approach in this respect. As the following step of my article, I will be discussing if the conclusions Lamarre arrives at through his readings capture the critical potential of his own theory. In this way, I intend to contemplate upon this seminal work, especially with respect to the field of anime studies.

### REVIEWING HAYAO MIYAZAKI’S THE WIND RISES THROUGH THE ANIME MACHINE

What Lamarre sees in Miyazaki’s *manga eiga* or “manga films,” especially in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (*Kaze no tani no Naushika*, 1984) and *Castle in the Sky* (*Tênkū no shiro Rapūtā*, 1986), is a new way of gaining “a free relation to technology” as idealized by Heideggerian philosophy, but of course “in animation” (Lamarre 62). Such a relation requires first of all turning attention to the place of technology in our lives. Miyazaki, according to Lamarre, deals with this theme
at three different levels: “(1) emphasizing animetism and avoiding (or comically deflating) cinematism by stressing the movement between multiple layers of the image; (2) designing whimsical vehicles and/or minimizing flight technologies while avoiding streamlined ballistic structures; and (3) harnessing or channeling the energies of young bodies” (62).

In order to eventually trace these three points in The Wind Rises, let us elaborate on them a little. The first two are, in fact, closely connected to each other, especially through movement. Animetism is one type of “potential” that moving images acquire, manifesting on and between surfaces, for example, on and between layers of celluloid sheets (cels) when they are laterally moved as in the case of limited animation. In contrast to this, there is cinematism, creating a sensation of proceeding into depth, which might be associated with a bullet’s (i.e., a ballistic) perspective and thus with destruction. Miyazaki’s animetism, however, is an intriguing hybrid, in that it brings together lateral movement and a certain sensation of depth, yet a depth unlike the one provided by cinematism. His type of animetism combines lateral gliding with painterly backgrounds that have a built-in sense of depth. This style appears to empower Nature by moving away from destructive technologies. Similarly, categorized under the second point that Lamarre notes down, the vehicles and flight technologies favored by Miyazaki also differ from the harmful machinery of uncontrollable speed. In their technical simplicity and tendency towards gliding and soaring, they go hand in hand with this certain type of animetism as well.

Differing from the previous two, the third point ties in with Studio Ghibli’s choice in characterization. On a visual level, especially the main characters are drawn and moved in ways which grant their bodies a semblance of mass and physicality that cannot be separated from the laws of gravity and Nature. Such an effect is achieved, for instance, through the use of strenuous poses and postures slightly slanting towards the earth. Still, it is mostly through the roles attributed to the young female and male protagonists in each story that a Heideggerian outlook can be, arguably, created. Girls and boys have a higher level of energy and freedom compared to adults, in that they are still not as fixed by gender, and in that they don’t necessarily lapse into romantic relationships. Such characters not only can step beyond the gendered relationship with technology quite prevalent in action and adventure genres (where male heroes generally have access to military technologies to defeat villains), but also beyond human beings’ relationship with technology on a much wider scale. Through the young female character receiving some kind of technological power, it is possible to acquire an awareness of technology as a general condition, rather than blindly waging war against it only to replace it with a more powerful and violent version. Ergo, according to Lamarre, in these three
manners, Miyazaki does not do away with technology as such. Instead, in place of destructive technologies, he puts friendly ones powered by and orbiting Nature.

Before moving on to some concrete examples to further explain what is meant by the last point, a brief summary of *The Wind Rises* might be necessary for those who are not familiar with the film. In the (allegedly) final work of his career, Miyazaki presents the story of Jirō Horikoshi, the engineer of the Zero fighter plane which was highly acclaimed for its maneuverability and became emblematic of the Japanese Imperial Forces during the Second World War. The film starts from Horikoshi’s childhood, with his dreams of flying his own plane, and covers a rather lengthy period of his life. He receives education in engineering and becomes a leading figure in his field. In the meantime, he falls in love with a girl named Naoko and marries her, only to eventually lose her to tuberculosis. Throughout the length of the movie, however, the focus seems to be on the protagonist’s aspirations in aviation, not only putting his love with Naoko in the background, but also leaving in the shadows the war in which Horikoshi’s designs are to play a crucial role. *The Wind Rises* ends not with the demise of the wife, but with a foreshadowing of the destruction that lay ahead of her death, i.e. the results of the war.

Going into visual details, it is noticeable that similar to Miyazaki’s preceding films, the clouds play a big part in adding volume to the space. Yet, of course, they are not the sole tools used for this purpose. Other elements of landscape, such as mountains, valleys, and trees, create the same effect of depth when light, shadow, and different shades of color are put together in a way that brings to mind Impressionistic paintings. For a film about a man who was trained in a major city and worked for companies with multiple offices and factories, it is interesting to observe that the majority of the action takes place outdoors, depicting the sky or Nature instead of urban or industrial environments. Through this kind of picturesque depiction, we are reminded that Nature is still there, in the background, ordering the space and even the lateral animetic movements as the center of gravity. In this way, *The Wind Rises* is no exception to the rest of Miyazaki’s oeuvre in how it presents friendly technologies orbiting Nature.

When it comes to movement, however, there is yet another and even more influential natural element at work in Miyazaki’s animation: the wind. Lamarre captures the function of Miyazaki’s ultimate alternative power source almost poetically in the following paragraph:

> Animation is an art of wind, an art of opening spaces to channel the flow of the wind. Animation is an art of spacing, of producing intervals through which the wind may blow and turn the wheels, limbs, eyes, and ears of the animator’s drawings. The wind of animation arises in gaps that appear between layers of image when you avoid closing
the image world. The wind blows through the characters, in their tendency to become weightless and unmoored and in the dynamics of angling their weight through different planes. In Miyazaki’s animation, the medium (animation) truly becomes the message (wind power). In sum, wind-powered animation is the paradigm for a new rootedness. (Lamarre 84–85)

In *The Wind Rises* too, as is suggested by the title itself, the wind comes forward as the main force which emotionally as much as physically moves both the audience and the characters/objects in the story. First of all, it works on an abstract level. The blowing wind coincides with emotional peaks, and in this way it almost becomes a bridge between people, connecting them “naturally.” For example, when Horikoshi’s hat gets carried away by the wind, it is Naoko who catches it. Similarly, when Naoko’s parasol flies away, it is Horikoshi who fetches it. In another memorable sequence, the wind weaves a web between the couple by carrying the paper plane they throw back and forth at each other. In this case, we see the wind not only acting as a bridge between the emotional worlds of two people, but also as a source of inspiration for plane designs, leading the protagonist back to his professional world.

In addition to its abstract quality, the wind also appears as an immense yet natural power source that can physically move massive objects like actual planes. Miyazaki, as in his previous films, works on the link between the wind and aviation meticulously, providing at least three types of planes in this case. First, there are planes which are mechanical in design and movement, such as the warplanes designed abroad and later imitated by the protagonist’s friend. In contrast to this type, there are “plastic,” wobbly planes that bounce almost cheerfully over the clouds, representing friendly, partially animated yet unreal technologies which might be considered Miyazaki’s trademark. The planes of the Italian designer Caproni and the bird/plane that Horikoshi rides in his dreams can be taken as examples of this second type. The last one is the most important type of plane in *The Wind Rises*, for it is that through which Miyazaki tries to come up with a magical mixture of the first and second. The planes designed by the protagonist, later to be the prototype for the Zero fighter, are paradoxically inspired by paper planes and fishbones—that is, organic, natural, and delicate materials. Horikoshi aims for beauty so obsessively that at one point, his project seems infeasible. The model he has in mind is so ideal that it is hard to imagine it serving the practical purpose of actually killing people in the context of war.

Nevertheless, although elegantly depicted, Horikoshi’s Zero fighter is an actual warplane used by the Japanese Navy. This point, also elaborated on in Susan J. Napier’s review of the film, is worthy of attention, as it positions the story in a specific period and location (mainly in pre-war Japan). In contrast to his earlier
films, which take place in completely or partially imaginary lands and ages, in *The Wind Rises* Miyazaki sticks to one point of time connected to actual destruction, war, and pain. As Napier states:

> [i]n films such as *Nausicaa*, *Laputa*, and *Princess Mononoke*, Miyazaki presented this question [of whether technology can or should serve as an end in itself] through science fiction and fantasy that kept the issues at a safe remove. In this film, Miyazaki forces us to look at history, (and very recent history, at that), and asks provocatively, what is the price of beauty? (Napier)

However, if there is an answer provided by the film, it certainly remains vague.

This time, due to the destructive historical reality which unfortunately offers no miracles or pat solutions, Miyazaki seems to put a dreamy web over the whole story. One especially striking example of this is the sequence which depicts Horikoshi’s experience of the Great Kantō Earthquake of 1923. Before the protagonist’s eyes, the straight rows of houses rise and then collapse. Cracks open in the earth to swallow trees and buildings; electric poles snap, sending sparks in the air. While the phenomenon itself and the resulting damage are depicted in great detail, in a bizarre manner, no one screams or dies. No conversations are heard during the turmoil, except for a loud humming noise. As traumatic as it was, the war never becomes a topic of open discussion or concern either, though we are vaguely reminded of its looming presence a few times.

In *The Wind Rises*, Miyazaki’s style of animetism that is closely connected to Nature and mostly embodied in the wind, fails to provide a new relation (in the Heideggerian sense) to technology. Miyazaki successfully blends beautiful imagery with a period of war. But everything gets subdued to an extent through the dreamy perspective. At the same time, the undeniable links to historical reality hinder the possibility of giving birth to alternative solutions for peace and progress, as they force Miyazaki to leave out one significant element which, according to Lamarre, defines his approach towards the perils of technology:

> Apparently, Miyazaki’s wind-powered animation needs a new god, in the form of a girl, who will impart some manner of constancy to the new understanding of technology—*Nausicaä* of the Valley of the Wind, Sheeta, Kiki, *Princess Mononoke*. [...] Without the figure of the girl [...] this future would simply appear as a return to the past, a return to old technologies and old forms of social organization, and thus as a repetition of older understandings of the world. In Miyazaki’s animation, openness to the animetic interval translates into the need for a new god, and it turns out that only a girl can save us now. (Lamarre 85)
Following Lamarre, it can be argued that in *The Wind Rises*, without the girl-god so characteristic of the director’s style, the protagonist gets stranded in his fantasy world, which becomes the only space for the wind to still blow freely. As briefly mentioned before, Miyazaki’s female protagonists might have some kind of technological power passed on to them (e.g. via a magical pendant in *Castle in the Sky*), but they end up in a special position rather than with an ability, enabling action only from a distance. The girl-god is a conflicting figure in that she can use “masculine” technologies such as guns, but has to be passive and receptive towards the technological condition. She becomes both its embodiment and the way to alter it. Boys’ energies, on the other hand, are more concrete and goal-oriented. Male characters have a passion for mechanics, taking direct actions on objects. This deviating stance, however, bears the risk of bringing about cycles of destruction. Even if done with good intentions, fighting enemy technologies with friendly technologies only solidifies the perception of technology as a tool, perpetuating the problems without ever noticing the core. To sum up, in *The Wind Rises*, the “boyish fascination with technology” (Lamarre 179) fails to find its balancing counterpart in the female character, who is not only older than the usual girl but also mortal. Naoko does not get connected to technology magically, professionally, or in any other way. Neither does she have any influence over her husband’s relation to technology. This time, as distinct from the earlier films analyzed by Lamarre, everything gets trapped inside the isolated, technological dream world of the male protagonist. It is true that Nature is still in the picture, as an entity existing by itself. All the same, it is already incapacitated, being embedded in, and limited by a fantasy space. Visions of delicate flying machines are unfortunately seized by the war industry.

**RE-VIEWING THE ANIME MACHINE IN THE WAKE OF THE WIND RISES**

From such a reading of Miyazaki’s work, what might be inferred in regards to *The Anime Machine*? Without the whole tripartite set of the particular style of animetism, aircraft design, and character formation discussed thoroughly in the book, it seems difficult to acquire the new type of free relation to technology that Lamarre spots in the other films by Miyazaki. In light of the above reading, I would argue that the main analogy Lamarre builds between Miyazaki’s works and Heideggerian philosophy cannot be extended to strictly cover *The Wind Rises* too, due to radical differences from earlier films in characterization and plot.

In all three parts of his book, Lamarre is concerned about how animetic movement and depth specifically get intertwined with plot and characters. But the conclusion that the first two might not always suffice to open our eyes to technology (as a condition) and to reform our handling of it is quite important.
First, it may create the impression that the plot and character-related traits are of greater significance in terms of criticality. Second (because the analogy Lamarre develops throughout one third of his book seems to have failed), the possible critical implications of cinematism and animetism might also be ignored. But it must be noted that it is still possible to claim that a type of criticality towards technology is maintained through structures of depth and movement, even in *The Wind Rises*. After all, Miyazaki keeps on avoiding ballistic perspectives and associating beauty with destruction directly.

So far, Lamarre’s reading of Miyazaki’s critical stance has been the topic of our discussion. Yet, in the conclusion of his book, Lamarre openly states that he sees a critical potential not only in Miyazaki’s, but also in the other works he analyzes in detail: “Schematically speaking, three manners of thinking technology animetically have appeared in this book: minimization (Miyazaki), optimization (Anno), and perversion (CLAMP). There is, potentially, a critical force in each of these approaches” (Lamarre 314–315). Instead of questioning the plausibility of this argument, I would like to point at a complication in the categorization, drawing again on my reading of *The Wind Rises*.

According to Lamarre, Miyazaki and Anno’s works differ in how and to what extent they employ animetism. The latter is supposed to be critically optimizing the animation technologies, by taking them to extremes in an attempt to stop the infinite reproduction of clichés. The ultimate example through which Lamarre discusses this strategy of Anno is *Neon Genesis Evangelion (Shin seiki Evangerion, 1995–96)*. The TV series famously ends with the characters’ disintegration into the lines that form their bodies. Anno’s works embrace the limited animation techniques (especially lateral movement and “flat compositing”11) while using a reduced number of cels and simple drawings that do not support a sense of permanent depth. When this combination is pushed to the limits, in the absence of any permanent point of reference in the background, an erratic sliding movement gets spread on the surface. In *Neon Genesis Évangelion*, while the characters end up in a crisis of action, the process of animation is also laid bare. Under such circumstances, where not only everything comes to a standstill but also bodies start to disappear, it seems impossible to claim fixed subjective positions for the characters as well as the viewers. As another example, Lamarre takes up *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water (Fushigi no umi no Nadia, 1989–90)*, an earlier TV series by Anno. Through the analysis of the panoramic vision of cityscapes, Lamarre again emphasizes the loss of fixed viewing positions stemming mainly from the flattened and schematized appearance of backgrounds. Additionally, focusing on the settings, Lamarre also discusses at length how the spaces inhabited by the characters keep leading into other spaces, the limits of which have also been defined. For instance, Lamarre points out that multiple episodes take place under the sea or below the...
face of the earth, and that both below and above such surfaces, every spot the characters set foot upon has already been discovered and manipulated for some practical purpose. This structure implies that the space has been turned into a passive resource to be exploited.

In Miyazaki’s works, on the contrary, Nature appears as a permanent frame of reference which makes it possible to take subjective positions, even though subjects cannot control Nature itself. Its power and majesty gush out through the openings between cels while they are moved laterally. Nature in its dynamism “promises to deflate and minimize hyper-Cartesianism” (Lamarre 315), to suppress as much as possible the effects of a speeded-up geometric perspective associated with destructive technologies under human control. In other words, while Miyazaki emphasizes Nature’s existence and guidance, Anno strips it of its privilege in ordering space and subject formations. Nonetheless, my reading of The Wind Rises puts forward that, on the level of plot, the dynamism of the wind/Nature is only possible in a dream world, already embedded—trapped in the frame of capitalism and militarism. Although they are strikingly dissimilar in terms of visual structures of depth, this particular plot brings Miyazaki’s Nature closer to the embedded one of Anno, who is not particularly interested in inventing friendly technologies. This twist, although observed only at the level of plot, somehow manages to blur the distinction Lamarre makes between the auteurs in question, appearing like a threat to his theory in general. Therefore, it becomes a point of critical importance whether the discussion of structures of depth and movement can be separated from other elements, such as the plot.

THE CRITICAL POTENTIAL BORN BETWEEN ANIME AND ITS VIEWERS

As Jaqueline Berndt notes down in her review of The Anime Machine, another question about criticality appears to involve who will be reading the works under scrutiny in the way Lamarre does (Berndt 59). Though the third part of The Anime Machine is centered on otaku modes of consumption, the book is not limited to the practices of such a specific audience group. While it discusses postmodernity and modernity quite at length, it does not have the agenda of shedding light on the nature and borders of postmodernity through the otaku, as is the case with Hiroki Azuma’s Otaku: Japan’s Database Animals. In any case, regardless of who exactly the audience is, the question remains whether viewers interrelate the philosophical notions cited by Lamarre with the anime they watch. Actually, this question is rendered irrelevant by Lamarre’s obvious focus on the “positive unconscious” (Lamarre xxxiv) rather than the individual anime viewer’s reception. Lamarre, then, resorts to theory in order to have a wider understanding of the effects certain types of movement create on the anime viewer in general. In short, he seems to focus on
the experience of anime on a universal scale, which I believe is also in line with his reading of potentiality.

Setting aside criticality for a moment, the “potentiality” that Lamarre discusses also seems to require special treatment. According to Lamarre, the disadvantage of limited anime in creating a sensation of movement into depth (a cinematic, ballistic view) does not mean that it is devoid of depth altogether. As in Miyazaki’s works, when the layers of cels are moved laterally, the potential of such movement manifests in the intervals. However, in Anno’s works, which are more representative of the limited anime form, “the use of flat backgrounds, together with lack of interest in opening the play between layers in depth, brings the depth of the multiplanar image to the surface, producing a superplanar image on which surface depths temporarily appear, full of potential energy” (Lamarre 133). A similar structure can also be observed in *Chobits*. In terms of plot, this work can only be partially connected to Miyazaki and Anno’s works, via the technological “relationship” between the protagonist and his computerized lover. However, being closer to Anno’s in style, through the combination of animetic movement, flat compositing, and the structure of exploded projection that offers no permanent frame of reference within the image, *Chobits* too gives birth to a crisis in action that gets inscribed on characters. They pop up and disappear, caught in an endless loop, not leading towards any grand finale but remaining in a world of oxymorons.

If we watch anime through the lens of Lamarre’s theory, we end up in “a distributive field in which movement into depth is replaced by density of information” (Lamarre 133). This field is smeared across TV, computer, cinema, and cell-phone screens. Here, the audience lose their fixed point of view and drift around on surfaces in marvelous speed. In such a field, then, it can be argued that trying to unearth hidden or deeper meanings is at least dubious: even if there is a critical potential involved, would it not also pop up on the surface, to become visible to everyone yet stay elusive and groundless? In other words, should not everything anime offers already be speeding right before our eyes?

Although the presumed general viewer does not seem to be reading Miyazaki as Lamarre does—they are most probably oblivious to the nuances of movement and Heideggerian philosophy—a quick look at online forums reveals that viewers may, and indeed do take the same narrative elements to talk about social criticism as well as its lack. For instance, the protagonist’s passivity in *The Wind Rises* seems to have been taken by different people both as an exaggerated case of political inaction as reaction to war, and as complete indifference to the suffering of victims in favor of personal interests. Among the critics, there has been no consensus about the film’s ambiguous political stance either. A plethora of both praise and condemning reviews have appeared since the film’s release. Curiously, while there
are many critics like Mark Kermode, who published his review under the title “A Breathtaking Story of Love and War in Japan,” there are yet so many others like Inkoo Kang who went as far as to label the film a whitewashing of war crimes. ¹³

When the story is directly about war, controversy may be expected. Nevertheless, by merely being available to and being enjoyed by a global audience, anime may also provide people with the vocabulary and tools to interpret events and articulate themselves, regardless of these anime texts’ specific representational content. As a source of common cultural experience, anime texts shape perception by being shared. This is not a phenomenon peculiar to anime, but is a general dynamic of popular culture. The Anime Machine, I daresay, may lend itself to the discussions of such a criticality that arises from the communicative potential existing among large groups of fans and consumers. It should be noted that Lamarre in fact points to “the interactions that arise between viewers and animations” (Lamarre xiii), referring to the intersecting points of anime “viewing” with fan activities like fansubbing or cosplay, and with media convergence. Moreover, not only does he acknowledge this situation, he even deems it to be what “makes for the novelty of anime” on the very first page of the introduction. Notwithstanding, considering how he mainly makes criticality his topic through individual works and auteurs, I believe that it is important to emphasize his acknowledgement of a multitude of viewer interactions once again and to extend it towards considering the exchanges among audiences.

CONCLUSION

Unlike Caleb Simmons and many other reviewers, my aim in this article was not to search for the flaws of Lamarre’s theory, but to examine how exactly he applies his theory to particular examples of animation, through mimicking his approach within the scope of The Wind Rises. As a result of my reading, I claimed that the criticality towards technology that Lamarre compares to Heideggerian philosophy cannot be strictly attained in Miyazaki’s last film, although the structures of depth and movement seem to be the same as in previous films.

Due to the fact that plots, characters, and structures of movement and depth are intricately interwoven in Lamarre’s reading, one element’s absence or transformation puts the interpretation of the others at risk. In the case of The Wind Rises, the comparison Lamarre makes between Miyazaki and Anno seems to fail due to the alterations in the plot and characterization. To put it clearly, because of the fact that Nature becomes a limited dream space, and the girl-god is replaced by a mature female character who builds no connection with technology, Miyazaki’s particular style described by Lamarre seems to get dangerously close to Anno’s,
and receives a dramatic blow to its critical stance. Nevertheless, it can still be argued that movement and depth preserve their critical implications. In short, although the three elements (of plot, character, and the structures of movement and depth) generally overlap or interact within a certain work, they might also contradict. Without emphasizing this point, the universal implications of animetic or cinematic movement, for example, might end up being ignored.

Criticality can be claimed on the level of characterization, plot, and movement, which don’t overlap at all times. These elements do not necessarily form criticality as a pack. They can be recombined to enable different readings, while also providing readings individually. The animetic and cinematic potentials of the moving image might bear the imprints of the technological condition, or the postmodern condition. However, there is also the necessity to consider, separately or in relation to the other components of a work, whether these potentials get subdued or emphasized, and whether they are consciously employed by an auteur (or a studio) in order to address certain problems. Last but not least, the audience’s varying takes on separate works, along with the surrounding fields of consumption and interaction must be kept in mind in connection to media specificities.

*The Anime Machine* does not provide textual readings spiced up with philosophy. It presents a multi-layered, comprehensive approach to present-day media studies. As a point of unforeseen interactions, the multiplanar animetic machine helps us reconsider anime in its connections to technology, modernity and postmodernity, environment, and human relations, in a nonrepresentational manner.
Notes

1. Miri Nakamura, for instance, emphasizes the use of the book in Japanese studies classes on animation, whereas Kathryn Dunlap, coming from a background of arts and humanities, highlights its contribution to the understanding of 3D films, and Caleb Simmons relocates it in comics studies. In her review available only in Japanese, Jaqueline Berndt points at the gap filled by *The Anime Machine* in the current scene of animation studies, especially in Japan.

2. Although Lamarre states that “much of what we think of as anime derives from variations on techniques associated with limited animation, that is, animation in which the number of frames used to construct motion is limited” (10), he locates animetism—which will be explained later in relation to Hayao Miyazaki’s works—beyond such categories as limited and full animation.

3. Throughout this article, Japanese names will also be given in first name-family name order, with which English reading audience is presumably more familiar.


7. By “animetic process” Simmons seems to be referring to the general dynamics of anime developed throughout the book, which are directly connected to the central position and effects of the abstract machine. This is closely related to Lamarre’s distinction between cinematism and animetism which will be explained in the following paragraphs.

8. Empowered in the sense that it orders space as a source of depth without being subjected to the destructive ballistic perspective. Miyazaki builds a particular sense of nature, which will be examined later, and hereupon will be indicated with a capital N.

9. Drawn in a curvy form, referring “not only to elasticity and flexibility (passive reaction) but also to the ability to bounce back, the capacity to adopt new form (active transformation)” (“Manga Bomb: Between the Lines of *Barefoot Gen*,” 263).

10. For Lamarre’s detailed list of similar vehicles, see *The Anime Machine*, 61.

11. A type of compositing that pushes the layers of cels towards the surface and minimizes the visibility of the gaps, therefore of the volume in-between. Miyazaki uses “open compositing,” which pronounces the gaps between the layers of cels, whereas full animation generally employs “closed compositing,” which also hides the animetic interval, but through following the rules of geometric perspective.
12. A particular group of people who indulge in the consumption (and to various extents the creation) of products and works strongly linked to anime, video games, computers, science fiction, special-effects films, anime figurines, and so on.

13. For further information about the controversy stirred by *The Wind Rises*, see Napier.
Works Cited


