

〈Research Note〉

The Effect of the Hybridity between Eastern and Western Cultures in Japanese Animations -From a Post-Colonial Perspective-

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Abstract

The futuristic cities and mysterious towns in Japanese animations often catch our curiosity as well as expand our imaginations. This paper analyzes two Japanese animated films: *Spirited Away* (2001), directed by Miyazaki Hayao; and *Ghost in the shell 2 – Innocence* (2004), directed by Oshii Mamoru. This research argues that these directors use the effect of hybridity between Eastern and Western cultures to create a complex commentary on contemporary Japan and its history. Through this analysis, based on a close reading or close textual analysis of the structural and visual components of these films, this research reveals the presence of both Orientalism and Occidentalism in Japanese animation. This paper also exposes that the films both accept and critique Japan’s dual reality, of masquerading itself sometimes as “Asia” to showcase its “exoticness,” and sometimes putting itself into the category of “the West” to identify itself as a modernized country.

Keywords: Japanese animations, Fantasy, Futuristic Cities, Orientalism, Occidentalism, Hybridity

Introduction

The futuristic cities and mysterious towns which so often appear in Japanese animations greatly attract our interest because of their power to spark our imaginations.¹ We can never realize these fantastic visions with our current technology, but nonetheless, the animators encourage us to imagine the shape that future cities may take. These mysterious towns and cities often have dignified buildings, complex interactions of darkness and light, and feature hybrids of Eastern and Western cultures. The directors of these animations invite us to explore their fantasy and/or futuristic cyborg worlds vicariously, through their characters’ experiences, so that we may enjoy the experience and become captives of the fantasy.

These unrealistic and mythic worlds have the power to help us unconsciously accept exotic things; they help us suspend our disbelief and accept their stories and settings. However, we should think

about what kinds of elements make these towns and cities “mysterious” or “futuristic.” Are these elements all new things, which we have never seen? In fact, one of the features of Japanese animation which helps us accept the exotic elements is that we can after all find something similar to our real life when we look closely at the cities or towns animated works present to us.

This paper analyzes two Japanese animated films: *Spirited Away* (2001), directed by Miyazaki Hayao; and *Ghost in the shell 2 – Innocence* (2004), directed by Oshii Mamoru. This research argues that these directors use the effect of hybridity between Eastern and Western cultures in order to create a complex comment on contemporary Japan and its history. Through this analysis, based on a close reading or close textual analysis of the structural and visual components of these films, this research reveals the presence of both self-orientalism and orientalism in Japanese animation, as an intricate reflection of the position of Japan in the world. Both films are very popular in Japan as well as in the West.ⁱⁱ Thus, examining these films also makes us recognize how we share the idea of “mysterious and futuristic cities” through Japanese animation. In this paper, I will argue that the films both accept and critique Japan’s dual reality, of masquerading itself sometime as “Asia” to showcase its “exoticness,” and sometimes putting itself into the category of “the West” to identify itself as a modernized country. Because Japan was intellectually and culturally colonized by the West in the early twentieth century, and then Japan physically, culturally, and mentally colonized Asia throughout the rest of that century, Japan’s position in the world has been a source of self-questioning. Although it has variously tried to be a part of the West or realign itself with East, it has always maintained itself, ultimately, as belonging to both. Japanese animation accepts this dual reality, while critiquing the effects it can have on daily life in Japan.

In order to see how Japanese animations illustrate and critique the position of Japan, we need to take a couple of steps. First, this paper analyzes *Spirited Away* to show how the film constructs its mysterious town. What are the elements of the strange or destabilized world which the film incorporates? I begin with an analysis of the bathhouse which, though based on traditional Japanese elements, combines Chinese as well as Western elements. The key point of this analysis is to establish a hierarchy of cultural powers and also the position of Japanese culture in the story. We will see self-orientalism: a Japanese director shows pre-modern Japan as an orientalist, alienating element; and also Occidentalism: arguing the supremacy of Western culture above Eastern culture. Secondly, it examines *Innocence* to reveal the combination of Asian elements, especially Chinese-ness, and Western culture; that is, *Innocence* also incorporates hybridity between eastern and western culture, like *Spirited Away* does. However, cities in *Ghost in the Shell 2 - Innocence* are based on Chinese cultural models, rather than Japanese: the film presents an exoticized stereotype of Chinatown. This paper demonstrates the similarity and differences of usage of Asian culture between *Spirited Away* and *Innocence*. This analysis supports my interpretation of these films and the relationship they

present between Japanese, Chinese, and European cultural effects. I argue that the use of multiple cultural points of view and effects insists on a particular view of Japan, which many Japanese people share, that Japan itself is a hybrid nation.ⁱⁱⁱ Through this point of view, the directors establish a power structure between Japanese, Chinese, and European cultures in these films. Thus, this research pays attention to the position of Japanese-ness in these films, in specific relationship to this power structure.

Definition and Problematics of the Word ‘Hybridity’

Throughout this paper, I use “hybridity” as a key word. Here at the outset, I set boundaries for its use, and give my definition. When using the phrase, “hybrid between cultures,” we need to be aware the two main issues of it: 1) combination of “pure” culture; 2) which cultures are involved. Kuan-Hsing Chen critiques the usage of hybridity, in “The Decolonization Question.” He says that

hybridity presupposes purity, something which is not hybrid. The counter of two ‘pure’ cultures produces hybridity. Does that mean the uncontaminated, original culture has never been ‘contaminated’ by and mixed with cultural forces coming from the ‘outside’? Which culture is not then hybrid (24).

As Chen implies, every culture in the world has combined with other cultures. We hardly see pure culture. For example, Japanese culture has been influenced by Chinese and Korean culture for a long time, and therefore is not “pure,” even though we often understand that Japanese culture is “unique;” that is, Japanese culture is different from Chinese, Korean and other cultures. Especially because of the idea of the nation, the idea of unique or pure cultures is an attractive one, which contemporary nations have used in order to unite their citizens.^{iv} However, there are no longer pure cultures in this contemporary world. When using the term hybrid in this paper, I do not mean the mixture of ‘pure’ cultures. In addition, Homi K Bhabha also argues about the hybrid. Bhabha insists that

Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialists disavowal, so that other ‘denied’ knowledge enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis its – its rules of recognition... (114)

As Bhabha mentions, only colonizers can make the effects of hybridity. Thus, this analysis pays attention to the weight of each culture; how much each culture is shown in these animations when they are mixed, and which culture is authoritatively illustrated. One thing I should mention is that these two films were produced by Japanese people, and so in many ways incorporate Japan-centered ideas.

As I pointed, “hybrid” is a problematic term, and we have to be aware of the issues around its use.

However, *Spirited Away* and *Innocence* illustrate the hybridity of cultures and hybridity of human and others as a key point. Thus, this research uses the term, hybridity, although it does not simply celebrate the hybridity of cultures in this paper.

Before analyzing the two films, we will confirm their relevance. I chose these two films because 1) they are well known among Japanese and North American fans; 2) The films illustrate mysterious and futuristic towns and cities in different ways by using hybridity between Eastern and Western cultures; 3) The films do not have an extremely evil character, but rather a young female character is the key person; 4) They both use “Asian taste” for creating an exotic atmosphere. This research shows these similar elements between the two films, but this research shows that Miyazaki Hayao and Oshii Mamoru present Japan’s position in their stories quite differently.

Analysis of Spirited Away

I start with an analysis of *Spirited Away* (2001), directed by Miyazaki Hayao. This film tells the story of its young female protagonist, Chihiro, trapped in a mysterious new world of spirits, as she tries to help her parents return to the outside world. The main setting in this story is the huge, mythic, solemn bathhouse, interestingly illustrated as a hybrid of cultures (Abe 140). I also focus on the town in which the bathhouse is located, and in which Chihiro’s parents turn into pigs; and the countryside, in which Zeniba, the twin sister of Yubaba, the manager of the bathhouse, lives alone. In addition, this research examines the relationship between Yubaba, whom I identify as representative of a western witch, and her Asian employees, who are actually hybrids between humans and animals or insects. The interpretation, growing from this analysis, focuses on the position of Japan in the world. This interpretation helps us to understand the comment on the power structure between West and East which Miyazaki incorporates in his work. The analysis will show that the director, Miyazaki, includes a range of biases toward Japanese, Chinese, and European culture when examining these settings.

When Miyazaki created the buildings in this nostalgic world, he was inspired by the *Edo-Tokyo Open Air Architectural Museum*, located near his office, Studio Ghibli (*Making of Spirited Away* – Nippon Special TV, 2001). This outdoor museum exhibits original buildings from the late 1700s to the mid 1990s. Some of the buildings in the museum combine Western and Japanese architectural styles, and some of them are traditional Japanese houses. The museum even includes a bathhouse, which serves as the direct inspiration for Miyazaki’s work. We can find many similar buildings in the museum and in the animation. Moreover, Miyazaki himself has indicated that the model of the bathhouse is based on several real bathhouses in Japan. One of these is Dogo Onsen in Matsuyama, Ehime prefecture. We can see similarities in the decoration of Dogo Onsen and the bathhouse in the film. The bathhouse also has features of Kiyosu Castle in Aichi Prefecture. Thus, the bathhouse, the

restaurants and shops in the strange world are based on early modern Japanese architecture.

When Miyazaki described the strange world of the film, he emphasized pre-modern Japanese architecture because contemporary Japanese people are not familiar with this style buildings, and so can feel their exoticness. Miyazaki often says that his target is Japanese audiences, especially Japanese children (Interview: *Hayao Miyazaki in Conversation with Roland Kelts* at UC Berkeley, 2010). It is obvious that he pays attention to Japanese audiences' point of view, and his proposal for elements which can create "strangeness" and "mysteriousness" is pre-modern Japanese culture. Further, his work utilizes a hybrid between pre-modern Japanese culture and European culture, which began in the Meiji period when Japan accepted modernity. That is why he illustrated pre-modern architecture in order to design the strange but attractive world. This point of view is actually a form of self-orientalism although it works well to produce the mysterious world for Japanese audiences.

In addition, Chinese culture is also illustrated in the film. For example, the night view of the town from the other side of the river is like the night view of Hong Kong (Adachi 75). Moreover, the restaurants, where Chihiro's parents ate the food without permission and turned into pigs, seem to be Chinese in style, incorporating examples of Chinese cuisine. The structure of the restaurants also incorporates Chinese building styles, even though the presentation itself is a hybrid between Japanese and Chinese elements, with an emphasis on Chinese. For example, the counter seats are actually not a standard feature of Chinese style restaurants, but Japanese people are familiar with the counter seating in ramen shops, which are considered as Chinese food by the Japanese. As a result, the food and the structure of the shops remind the Japanese audience that the town is like a bizarre Chinatown. The point is that this Chinese-styled town is exotic and mysterious for Japanese audiences. Illustrating the shops in a Chinese style supports the creation of an exotic world in the story. In addition, the relationship between the bathhouse and this imaginary Chinatown shows a power structure. The bathhouse, which is based on pre-modern Japanese architecture, is the main and the most important setting; the Chinese-styled town is a less-important setting and supports the production of an exotic, mysterious, and somehow scary atmosphere in this story. Visually, the film presents Japan as stronger and more central to the story, while China and the Chinese influence are weaker and play a supporting role.

Furthermore, we can see specific reference to Chinese culture: food; the Chinese reading of *kanji*; and dragons as "bad" things. Some of these explicitly Chinese references serve as a symbol of uncleanness or impurity, and so I argue that the film presents a cultural hierarchy, with Chinese cultural reference as an indication of something negative. The first example of this is that eating Chinese food made Chihiro's parents turn into pigs. When No Face (Kaonashi) became a monster, he consumed much Chinese food. The presentation of Chinese food is richer and looks more delicious than the presentation of Japanese food, such as rice balls, but the gorgeousness makes the characters

turn into animals or become evil. In fact, these foods are made by the normal cooks at the restaurant and the bathhouse. On the other hand, simple Japanese food, such as rice balls and bitter dumpling (*nigadango*), made the characters well or purified. In fact, Haku, who gave Chihiro the rice balls, and the Stink God, who gave her a bitter bumping, are both river gods. The important Japanese food in the story is provided by Japanese gods. Thus, it is clear that Japanese food is described as an important food, while Chinese food makes trouble. Everything from the appearance of the food itself and its presentation on various dishes (lined up side by side) highlight that the food which creates problems for the characters is culturally Chinese.^v

Secondly, the Chinese reading of *kanji* (*onyomi*) creates negative connotations for Japanese audiences in specific instances. Yubaba, the owner of the bathhouse, took Chihiro's name to give her the new name "Sen." Sen is the Chinese reading of 千; she has to use this unfamiliar name, keeping her real name, which is the Japanese reading of the kanji (*kunyomi*), a secret, in order to return to the outside world. Keeping the Japanese-reading of kanji for her name is one of the most important keys which permits Chihiro to escape from the world of the bathhouse; that is, the Japanese name here is shown as a significant thing. Moreover, the name of the bathhouse is *yuya*, 油屋 in Chinese characters. The meaning of the character *yu*, 油, here is oil, which is often considered as opposite to water (Utsukibara 78). Ordinarily, in Japanese, the word for bathhouse is 湯屋. Although in Japanese the reading of the characters, 湯屋, sounds the same as 油屋 (*yuya*), the proper character for *yu* (湯) in this case means 'hot water'. Miyazaki utilizes a kanji character with the same sound, *yu*, but the opposite meaning of water, oil. This gives a destabilizing effect, a weirdness. Miyazaki effectively uses a tension between the Japanese and Chinese reading of kanji to create strangeness. The point here, however, is that the strangeness is created precisely by the *Chinese* reading of kanji.

Thirdly, this paper focuses on the use of dragon imagery, which moved from China to Japan in the pre-modern period. Here, it is a symbol of violence and impureness in this story; when Haku transforms into a dragon, he carries out bad work for Yubaba, afterwards losing his memory of what he had done. However, once the spell was broken, he returned to his human-like appearance as Haku. Miyazaki's illustration of the violent dragon implies a connotation to that image—that of something nasty. This is consistent throughout the film; further, the dragon represents a creature acting under outside influence, or in a state of having lost its self-control. Therefore, we can see the usage of Chinese culture to create a connotation of nasty and impure things in this story, in order to design a mythic world. Reference to Chinese culture creates an uncomfortable destabilization in Miyazaki's work, while emphasizing a kind of Japanese cultural superiority. In the next section, this paper examines how Western culture is shown in this story. Is it different from the usage of Japanese or Chinese culture?

Western culture is also a key point for making a strange world. Examining the relationship between

Japanese culture and Western culture shows us another type of power structure: Occidentalism. One of the obvious examples of Occidentalism is the structure of the bathhouse. We may divide the bathhouse into three levels, each consisting of one or more floors: the lowest level of the house consists of the boiler, Kamaji's work place, and the employees' rooms, which are above Kamaji's room; in the middle part of the house there are baths and the above of the bath rooms there is banquet halls for gods; and the top level of the house is Yubaba's Western, luxuriously-decorated room. As I mentioned earlier, the exterior of the bathhouse is in the style of early modern Japanese architecture. In contrast the interior of the lowest to the middle of the house is traditional Japanese style rooms while the top of the house is European style room, and there is much luxurious European furniture.

The structure shows a type of power relationship between Japan and the West. The strong employer, Yubaba, lives in the Western-style room, which is located on the top of the house, and manages employees physically and mentally by using magic. I argue that this arrangement strongly implies that the West has been at the top of the hierarchy and has been controlling Japan since the 19th century.

Furthermore, the mysterious town where the bathhouse is located, is squalid, and each small and somehow old building stands next to each other. On the other hand, Zeniba's place looks like a western countryside (Ustukibara 79) although the roof of her house is *karabuki-yane*, which is an old-fashioned style of thatching for the roofs of Japanese houses. The interior of Zeniba's house is also in a Western style, and the inside of the house is tidy and clean. In addition, Yubaba's room is also clean: when it is not, she uses magic to organize it. We have here a strong, visual contradiction between squalid and unorganized Asian places, such as the Japanese-style employees' room and the Chinese-style town, and the huge and clean Western places, such as Yubaba and Zeniba's places—a contradiction which includes aspects of power. It is a stereotype of both cultures, showing implied differences between the two cultures. The emphasis here on Western culture, with its implied power, becomes a form of Occidentalism.

Miyazaki's use of this hybrid between Eastern and Western culture enhances the creation of a strange and mysterious world, beyond what he could have achieved if he had used only Japanese early-modern cultural styles to make the bathhouse. Inclusion of hybrid aspects removes what otherwise might have been simply a historical reference. However, the way of illustrating different cultures in different ways clearly shows a power structure between East and West. Then, why does Miyazaki illustrate Western culture in the higher place of the hierarchy, or illustrate it powerfully at least?

Especially, the settings of Miyazaki's early animations are often European countries. He actually explains why his fantasy worlds are often placed in, or borrow elements from, Europe. In interviews, he has said that "we, Japanese illustrators, basically use the method learned from European painting which revolves around lights and dimension" (Interview: *Hayao Miyazaki and Moebius*, 2008).

Miyazaki admitted the influence of European painting, and he also mentioned in a different interview that “my generation has more yearning for European countries and was more interested in European culture than the young animators’ generation” (Interview: 特別企画 宮崎監督が原作に惹かれた理由#234, 2010). From these Miyazaki’s interview, he implies that he cannot avoid this yearning for European culture, and it is not only him. Many Japanese people after modernization have had a yearning for Western culture and have tried to mimic it. As Miyazaki mentioned, generations younger than his have become more familiar with Western culture; it has become much easier to experience Western culture by traveling or via the Internet or other media. However, many of the younger generations still have a yearning for Western culture. In other words, Japan has experienced a kind of cultural colonization by the West especially after modernizing in the Meiji period and after the Pacific War. Moreover, his animations themselves influenced many young Japanese people and help create a kind of bias for the West, but this bias has already been shared among Japanese people since Japan accepted the process and definitions of modernization in Meiji.

In *Spirited Away*, Miyazaki creates a mysterious world by employing a hybridity of Eastern and Western culture, which is a unique technique, although it contains specific elements of Occidentalism. However, the hybridity between East and West works well to create mysteriousness in *Spirited Away*. This paper demonstrates the creation of hybridity in another animated film, *Ghost in the Shell 2- Innocence*, but the usage of hybridity and the emphasis of Chinese culture in Oshii Mamoru’s work illustrates a different argument from that of Miyazaki’s work.

Analysis of *Ghost in the Shell 2- Innocence*

The story of *Ghost in the Shell 2* describes a cyborg detective, Batou, and a mostly human detective, Togusa, trying to unravel the reasons for a murderous robot revolt in the year 2032. The setting of the film is especially complex, as the main characters travel between a real world and a simulated world as a result of their cyberbrains being hacked. *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) has strongly influenced many film directors and animators. For example, Larry and Andy Wachowski who produced *The Matrix* were influenced by Oshii’s *Ghost in the Shell*.^{vi} Even now the animated film, *Ghost in the Shell*, has a strong influence, and has recently been adapted as a live action film, *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), directed by Rupert Sanders. *Ghost in the Shell 2 - Innocence* provides a complex image of a simulated world, which gives a new concept of the world through the development of computer science, and the real world which is described through the creation of a hybridity of East and Western cultures. Thus, the last half of this paper examines *Ghost in the Shell 2 - Innocence* to reveal the effect of the hybridity of cultures. The analysis shows different elements of hybridity from those of *Spirited Away*.

As I focus on the hybridity between Eastern and Western culture, this paper specifically focuses on

architecture, food, and languages in *Innocence*. I start my analysis with architecture in the animation. Although the setting is Japan in 2032, we can hardly see Japanese elements in the film because many places look like China. We see a clear example of this in the location of the first incident—in brief, a gynoid^{vii} killed her owner and two police officers, so Batou has been assigned to apprehend her; he killed the gynoid. This series of murders occurs in a back alley in what appears to be a Chinese-styled town. When looking at the row of houses and streets, from architectural and other details, it gives a strong resemblance to a Chinatown. Perhaps the audience may assume that Japan in 2032 will be occupied by China; that is, the town has many Chinese features. For example, we can see that all the signboards are written in traditional Chinese characters, which contemporary Japanese people do not use, and all the shops have Chinese names. Secondly, many passers-by speak Chinese, either Mandarin or Cantonese. According to Oshii, passers-by speak Chinese, Cantonese, Korean and Japanese although I can recognize only Chinese. Thus, the atmosphere is predominantly that of China. In addition, the place where Batou often buys dog food for his dog, also looks like a Chinese corner store though the shop sells diverse international products, such as Japanese baby snacks: *Bisuko*, *Morinaga milk*, and Western foods, such as *Quaker Oats*' products and so on. Thirdly, the office of a Japanese Yakuza group appears to be located in a Chinese-styled building, too. There are only Chinese characters on the signs on the outside of the building, and the structure of the Yakuza's room is in the Chinese style, with a round, decorative opening in the wall. Although we can find a household Shinto altar in the room, Chinese characters everywhere on the wall and the Chinese structure of the room indicate that the place is different from a traditional Japanese Yakuza office. Furthermore, eating Chinese food emphasize the Chinese-ness (Mastuda 145) in the scene, too. The locations where Batou shot and killed the violent gynoid and yakuza are always in a Chinese-styled town. The image of the town is dirty, darker, more dangerous, and more squalid than other locations in the film which have less Chinese influence. This, too, participates in a typical and stereotypical view of Chinese cities, which many Japanese and Western people have. This representation of the dangerous Chinatown emphasizes the exotic and abnormal life of the near-future. This is an orientalist vision, however, which Edward W. Said defined in his book, *Orientalism*. Said critiqued the West for producing power structures between West and East in order to keep controlling the East in different ways in *Orientalism*. Oshii utilizes bizarre towns to emphasize a particular aspect of the future, and incorporates elements with a cultural hierarchy. In other words, Oshii illustrates Chinatown as a dystopia.

We can see a similar presentation in a different science fiction film. In the 1980s, futuristic and technological Japanese cities were used to illustrate a dystopia in Western films, such as *Blade Runner*. Morley and Robins insisted in *Space of Identity* that

the West never see Japan directly. It is as if the Japanese were always destined to be seen through the fears and the fantasies of Europeans and Americans. Japan is the Orient, containing all the West most lacks and everything it most fears. Against Japanese difference, the West fortifies and defends what it sees as its superior culture and identity. And so the West's imaginary Japan works to consolidate old mystifications and stereotypes: 'they' are barbaric and 'we' are civilized; 'they' are robots while 'we' remain human; and so on (172).

As Morley and Robins insisted, the West looked at Japan as a technologically advanced but fearful place, and Japanese people were considered as barbaric and/or robots because of their technologized aspects. If we can agree with Morley and Robins, we can realize what Oshii did in *Innocence*. Oshii replaces this Japanese position with China in his animation. Because since the early 2000s Chinese technology and economic power have improved, Japan, in economic terms, has come to fear or at the least be apprehensive of China, like the Western people were afraid of Japan in 1980s. In order to replace Japan's position with China, Oshii shifted a set of negative images onto China. Moreover, Oshii emphasizes Chinese culture in the northern city, Etorofu. Interestingly, in this setting in the film, Oshii illustrates not only Chinese culture but also a hybrid between Eastern and Western cultures.

Oshii created a new style of hybrid between Chinese-ness and European gothic, which is called "Chinese gothic" (Oshii and Ueno 69). The city has many high and modern towers with Chinese statues on the top. Furthermore, some magnificent buildings resemble European gothic churches, but also have Chinese style statues instead of European ones. This Chinese-gothic shows exactly the hybridity of Chinese and European culture, while destabilizing the expectations of the audience. In addition, the festival in the city emphasizes the exoticness Asia. We can see many Chinese statues, masks, a ship and traditional buildings. Oshii precisely took the images of the masks and the makeup of the dancers from a festival in Taiwan (The making of *Ghost in the Shell 2*). He uses the Taiwanese festival to have a realistic element in his animation, and the reality of the Taiwanese festival gives a sense of exoticness to the non-Chinese audience. Moreover, the scene of the festival uses slow motion and spiritual Asian-like music, so the audience can deeply admire the scene; that is, the scene of the festival stresses Asian exoticness. Oshii uses the effect of the exoticness to emphasize the mysterious atmosphere although it leads the audience unconsciously to have a bias for Chinese culture.

The point of this exoticness is that once Japanese audiences step back from Asia, where they are geographically and culturally located, and watch the emotional Chinese festival scene, they will consider Chinese culture as part of a spiritual, legendary and pre-modern world. This Japanese point of view takes part in Orientalism because Japanese audiences have the potential to objectify Chinese culture as part of an uncivilized world.

Like Miyazaki, Oshii also illustrates western culture as a comparison of Chinese culture. Interestingly,

the main characters such as Batou and Togusa live in western homes although they often patrol in Chinatown, where incidents always occur. Batou's apartment seems to be located in Chinatown, but inside of his apartment there is western furniture. In addition, Togusa lives in a western home in a westernized area, marked by a clearly organized and wide space. Because these main characters live in westernized places, the Japanese audiences are positioned in the West in order to objectify the Asian world, specifically the Chinese-styled world, as a chaotic place. Once the Japanese audiences place themselves into this Western side, they do not have to conceptualize a personal threat, when the various battles in the film take place in an ostensibly "Asian" space.

Furthermore, we can see the representation of the west as a peaceful world. For example, we see warm and bright lights from the opened front door of the Togusa's home though we cannot see inside of the house. What does the warm light mean in this film? This emphasizes a binary opposite; one is a dangerous Chinatown, which is dark and dirty; on the other hand, Togusa's western home is clean and has warm light (not just bright light like a laboratory), which illustrates a peaceful atmosphere. Oshii describes Eastern culture and Western culture through a set of different images, which relate to Orientalism. It is important to keep in our minds that the audiences usually see the world of the story through the main characters' eyes, so the main characters' places are considered as a safe, relaxed, or peaceful place in the story; that is, their Western homes emphasize a contrast with dangerous and dark Chinatown.

Finally, this paper reveals how Oshii illustrates the incidents' sites, where "bad" people are. As we saw, the first incident site consists of the Yakuza office and the Chinese corner store set in gloomy Chinatown. Furthermore, there is one more notable place, Kim's house in Etorofu. It looks like a western luxury house because of the European architecture and furniture. At a glance, there is no Asian culture in the house. However, there are Confucian words in Chinese in the air when Kim talks. The architecture and interior are western style, but once we see Chinese characters in the air, it leads us to the Asian world in a matter of seconds. Again, the animation shows that the bad person is always somehow related to Asia, especially Chinese culture as Japanese culture isn't shown in the scene.

On the other hand, in the laboratory, where Batou and Motoko reunite and destroy many gynoids, there is a true criminal. The principal is a little human girl, who made the gynoid, Hadaly, go out of control and kill Hadaly's owners so that someone may recognize the problem and come to help her. She was actually kidnapped and has been captured into a "ghost dubbing" machine by the gynoid company LOCUS SOLUS. The evilest one is, of course, this company which kept dubbing the children's ghosts into their product, gynoids, and sell them for profits. The end of the story reveals this human girl is the true criminal of the series of murder although she was a victim of the company.

The key of analyzing *Innocence* is how each character and place are related to either a Chinese-or European style of representation, to reveal how this film perhaps unconsciously represents Asia as

dark, dangerous, and evil, while on the other hand, Western features are bright and safe. In fact, the film at the end does not illustrate Chinese-ness around the girl although she is the one who made the gynoid to kill its owner. In other words, the atmosphere without Chinese-ness implies that she is not really evil. Even when she was rescued by Batou and Motoko, she gave them her excuse and said that “I didn’t want to be a doll.” Her word makes the audiences sympathize with her although Batou scolded her about what she has done.

Through my analysis, we have recognized that Oshii clearly distinguishes peaceful environments and mysterious and dangerous environments by illustrating Western culture or Chinese culture. This is Orientalism from a Japanese person, who positions his work in line with the west to look down on Asia. Oshii may not mean that using Chinese-ness describes “bad” things, but when we look at the story closely, we can see that evilness is consistently related to Chinese culture. In addition, this analysis exposes that Oshii replaces the position which Japan held in American film, as a technological and barbaric world, with China in this animation. Morley and Robins criticized this aspect of some American films, which illustrated the techno-oriental image of Japan in 1980s; however, now we are able to apply the same issues to a critique of Oshii’s work because he shifted this techno-oriental image onto China and illustrated Chinatown as a fearful place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, both films, *Spirited Away* and *Ghost in the Shell 2- Innocence* demonstrate the hybridity between Eastern and Western culture to describe a mysterious world. Both of them illustrate Western-styled spaces as wide, clean, or peaceful. On the other hand, Eastern images were illustrated as dirty, chaotic and dangerous. However, this analysis of the two films uncovers that the position of Japan in these films is both significantly different as well as similar. Miyazaki presented Japan as placed below the West when he describes the hierarchy of the main setting, the bathhouse. Miyazaki clearly shows Occidentalism; Japan cannot be equalized with the West, through the animation. Although Yubaba’s room is illustrated as luxuriously western in style, and some furniture is flying with magic in order to produce a stately and mysterious space, the room is located in the top of the bathhouse to show her power. Thus, it became clear that Western culture is set on the top of the hierarchy; this implies the elements of Occidentalism from a Japanese perspective. In the history, Japan was “colonized” culturally by the West, and many Japanese people have admired the West. Thus, the hierarchy may suggest the situation of Japan in international politics since Japan modernized.

Although Yubaba, who represents the West, finally changes her mind and shows generosity to Chihiro, her position in the bathhouse does not change—she maintains control over her employees.

Even though Chihiro grows up during her time in the mysterious world, she could not pull Yubaba down from the top, but tries to be accepted by Yubaba. This scene implies Japan's position in the world since Japan has modernized. At the same time, the film also demonstrates Orientalism. Because Japan became modernized earlier than other Asian countries, Japan tended to look down on other Asian countries, such as colonizing Asian countries and starting wars in the 20th century. Even in the film, *Spirited Away*, Japanese culture, especially Japanese food, plays a role of purifying and curing the characters while Chinese food is illustrated with problems. This paper has shown how the anime illustrates Chinese elements, which made the characters evil, and how Japanese elements are able to cure them. That is, it shows the power structure between Japan and China. Through analyzing how each culture is illustrated and what they represent, the analysis of the film reveals the Occidentalism and Orientalism through which the director and the audience unconsciously share their bias.

In contrast with Miyazaki, Oshii tried to diminish the presence of Japanese culture in his futuristic cyborg world, and replaced a techno-oriental Japan with a techno-oriental China in *Ghost in the Shell 2*. That is, this film also shows Orientalism from a Japanese perspective, which has bias toward China. In some ways Oshii participates in a political repositioning of Japan, as having joined the modern West and looking down on the barbaric East. As this paper has revealed, the incidents are illustrated in the Chinese-styled parts of town, which are dark, dirty, and dangerous. In the 1980s, we saw similar scenes in Hollywood's science fiction films, such as *Blade Runner* (1982) . At the time, Japanese-styled towns were illustrated as futuristic but dark and dangerous. These works clearly showed Orientalism from a Western perspective; however, twenty years later, a Japanese animator illustrates Chinese styles and elements in a futuristic city. This represents a possible Japanese fear toward China; that is, Oshii sees an imaginary China which includes economic and political fear which Japanese people may have. At the same time, illustrating dark, dirty, and dangerous Chinese-style towns means that Japan defends its own identity and superiority. That is Orientalism from a Japanese perspective toward to China. In fact, the story illustrates that the Chinese-styled town is not a clear and clean place like the Western-styled homes in the film. The film illustrates a new type of problem; that is, the kidnapped girl and gynoids are wrongfully controlled by the company for profits and by the owners for their pleasure. As a result, they seek revenge. This futuristic incident happened in a Chinese-style town, exactly showing Orientalism. Furthermore, when the film creates exoticness, it borrows the image of a real festival in Taiwan. At the festival scene, only the music sounds like that of a Japanese folk song, which recalls ancient Japanese times. By using a Taiwanese festival and the Japanese song together, the sense of exoticness was enhanced in the scene. It reveals Orientalism and even self-Orientalism to demonstrate what the futuristic city looks like. Both films illustrate hybridity of Western and Eastern elements to provide a mysterious or futuristic world; however, the elements actually represent Orientalism and Occidentalism.

Historically, Japan experienced both sides—considering, or being made to consider, itself as Oriental/barbaric by the West, and then considering others as constituting the Orient to show Japan’s superiority. It seems that the Japanese imagination still cannot fully remove the influence of these experiences from itself. That is why we can see Occidentalism and Orientalism in these most popular Japanese animations. Analyzing these two films makes us recognize that we always have bias to other cultures in order to identify ourselves. It is difficult to remove the bias, but it is very important to keep this clear in our minds; because we already have bias to other cultures, we should criticize whatever we see, including our favorite popular culture.

Notes

- ⁱ Futuristic elements in Japanese SF anime have been widely analyzed, such as *Full Metal Apache: Transactions Between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-Pop America* by Takayuki Tastumi, *Tokyo Cyberpunk: Posthumanism in Japanese Visual Culture* (2016) by Steven T. Brown, and so on.
- ⁱⁱ *Spirited Away* is the most successful film in Japanese history, grossing about \$300 million worldwide. It won the Academy Award for Best Animated Film Feature at the 75th Academy Award, and also won Golden Bear at the 2002 Berlin International Film Festival.
Innocence was honored best sci-fi film at the 2004 Nihon SF Taisho Awards and was nominated at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival.
- ⁱⁱⁱ It is obvious that Japanese culture is composed by Ainu, Yamato, and Ryukyu culture at least, and it has been influenced by Chinese and Korean culture for a long time, and also by American and European culture since 20th century when Japan started modernized.
- ^{iv} One of the best examples is Nihonjin-ron, which have been discussed.
- ^v The traditional Japanese style of presenting food is that of each dish is placed on a small plate, or different small plates, rather than in a large portion on a large plate.
- ^{vi} *Hollywood is haunted by Ghost in the Shell* Guardian in News and Media Limited or its affiliated companies. First published on Mon 19 Oct 2009
<https://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/oct/19/hollywood-ghost-in-the-shell>
- ^{vii} Gynoid is a “feminine” humanoid robot, which has human-like artificial intelligence.

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