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## **Animatedly Animated: Undoing the Body & Assembling the Real Through Media/Geography**

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*Tetsuo!*

*Kaneda!*

TETSUO!.....KANEDA!.....AS THESE SOUNDS REVERBERATE through my head, (or is it my gut?), they bring to me a calm air of familiarity entangled with violent forces of difference. Through movements of creation and fantasy these sounds become the creation of fantasy; through my body, as affect, in me. Less a wave than a presence, more familiar than strange—Tetsuo! Kaneda!—Their sound is an image. Their image is an affect. Their affect is the real. In the assemblage of these sounds I lose myself in geography as a coordinated location to become part of geography as creation. Tetsuo! Kaneda! Me? Yes, me! My body is undone by these images, only to be (re)created; a (re)creating of something unique, something original, something new. Together we are assembling the real of the registers of thought and extension, discovering the striving of the will and appetite, living the relation of the one and All.

Tetsuo! Kaneda! Ostensibly, they are sounds as signifiers—as two names of two characters from Otomo's 1988 film *Akira*. But they signify nothing in or to me. Instead, they give rise to a rapid calmness which envelopes me and allows me to partake in the ever creative assemblage of film and body. They are sounds of imagination and animation, of graphic images one through the other, moving through that condensed viewpoint that I perceive as me; pushing it, changing it, transforming it: into a challenger. A challenger of what? For what? For the new as the new; through the real that is—for a real that becomes. Not an aether of waves, but an aether of pure affect.

All forms of media offer this avenue of exploration and examination to the world; to geography. But animation takes these forces of media—word, image, sound, color,

light, vibration, etc.—and creates a different intensity all its own. Animation is a world greeting the Universe with a firm handshake, asking it, teasing it, provoking it, to take notice of what lies beyond (or before) its current space-time. This is what animation does so well: it challenges through the lines of its creating. It is the political and the wondrous, the practical and the fantastic, the ethical and the outrageous. It shouts to the Universe that the practical must be fantastic—the ethical must be outrageous—or else it alienates and tortures the multitude that fall outside its territory. This speaks to geography. Not by shouting, but by whispering in the machinery of its ear: geography must be fantastic if it is to Become instead of be, Count instead of count, Do instead of doze.

My earliest recalled encounter with these forces of media belongs to Disney's *Fantasia* (1940). As a young child, or so my mother once related to me, I stood atop a theater chair for a large duration of its showing, repeatedly clapping my hands and bouncing up and down, “ooooohhing” and “ooooohhing” over and over. My body was captured and enraptured by its movement of images; images of light demanded my attention, images of sound tickled my wonder, images of color seized my control. A different body emerged from the theater that day. One delighted that the Universe that is can be—is always—challenged by worlds that become.

Whether this story has crept through the battle-scarred crevices of my memory by its own force and volition is unclear. It well may be my mother's story that planted or fueled these memories in me. Yes, I fully recognize that this event may well have never actually, externally, exactly played out this way. But, for my purposes here, it does not matter. It is still real; still materially relevant. It is a memory and a particular affect that is present with(in) me as I map out this essay, affecting the trajectory of my expression. And this speaks to my main point: animation, like this memory, is always immanently real. Animation is not just representation, metaphor or signification of spaces and times deemed “real,” or, if one prefers, concrete. Like memory, that is only its weakest and most innocuous force. Yet, unlike memory, animation lacks nothing. It is not a subtraction from the Universe, but an addition to it. This takes me back to those vibrations of sound, color and light: Tetsuo and Kaneda. Tetsuo! Kaneda!

If *Fantasia* is my earliest memory of animation and its affective creation of the new, *Akira* is the fondest and the most enduring. And they are not alone: there is Otomo's *Cannon Fodder* (1995); Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) and *Innocence: Ghost in the Shell 2* (2004); Yamaga's *Royal Space Force: The Wings of Honneamise* (1987); Miyazaki's *Princess Mononoke* (1997); and Shinkai's *Voices of a Distant Star* (2002) and *The Place Promised in Our Early Days* (2004), to name only a very few. Equally, other realms of media converge and swirl in, through and around me, challenging me to challenge, such as the pulsating humor of Terry Pratchett's multiverse, the quiet tranquility of Khalil Gibran's drawing and the intense gyrations of Demetrio Stratos' voice. To say these pulsations and vibrations of line and light, color and word, movement and sound, are like

friends is to rely too much on simile. They *are* friends: companions; guides; mentors; at least to the degree that they help me—or is that prod me?—to actively question and challenge habitual notions of the real, conventional conceptions of the norm, prevalent practices of relation, static notions of space and time. This is the greatest union of media and geography: a union which assembles offspring that express and feel space as alive, all beings as social, each be(com)ing as unique yet related. These are offspring that do not seek to separate, deny or negate the body's affect, but are informed by and through it. These are offspring that have reclaimed the imagination as a compositional force of the real; as a complementary force of what becomes between bodies as intensive openings. These are a few of the offspring that have become the machining ears of a territory called geography. Sound is an image. Image is an affect. Affect is the real. Tetsuo! Kaneda! Where are we going to go? What are we going to assemble? Who are we creating, now?