



ANIME

# Ghost in the Shell (Kôkaku Kidôtai)

Beautifully animated and disturbingly prophetic, *Ghost in the Shell* is a futuristic tale centred on Public Security Section 9's hunt for supreme hacker The Puppet Master. This is a world where governments are dependent on computer-controlled systems, and cyber-terrorists pose the biggest threat to global stability.

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I saw *Ghost in the Shell* on its first limited cinema release in Britain, with a flatly delivered American dub. Back then, I thought it was dull despite its beauty. Rewatching *Ghost* with subtitles helped, as did seeing its anime precursors. Oshii Mamoru's political drama *Patlabor 2* (1993) established much of *Ghost*'s sensibility. It contained a sequence that's a wordless poem in pictures, showing Tokyo patrolled by the military, yet beautified by snow.

In *Ghost*, the equivalent sequence involves the film's main character, Major Kusanagi. She's an Internal Affairs agent, with a synthetic body but a human brain. In a city modelled on Hong Kong, Kusanagi hunts down a criminal, the Puppet Master, who hacks into people's machine-meshed brains.

*Ghost*'s central sequence, wordless like the one in *Patlabor 2*, has Kusanagi passing along a canal through anonymous crowds. The images suggest a mire of decay (broken bicycles in mud) and disposability (Kusanagi glimpses replicas of her mass-produced body, including a mannequin in a shop window). Then rain falls, like a *deus ex machina*: at once everything is quickened, reanimated. Earlier, a voice out of nowhere whispered to her, quoting Saint Paul. 'For now we see through a glass darkly.'

About a third of *Ghost*'s budget was provided by Britain's Manga Entertainment, hoping for a spectacle like *Akira* (1988). Indeed, *Ghost* serves up ear-ringing gun battles, exploding heads and a heroine who dives down a skyscraper. The story has elements of *Blade Runner* (1982) and cyberpunk fiction. Amusingly, *Ghost* opened just as cyberpunk was being declared dead in Hollywood, thanks to the flops of *Johnny Mnemonic* and *Strange Days* (both 1995).

But *Ghost*'s intellectual detachment feels more Kubrickian. Near the end, there's a perspective trick with a mirror, recalling the obelisk in the hotel in *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). *Ghost*'s humanity comes from Kawai Kenji's increasingly passionate score, and from the lead Japanese voice actors, who play seasoned secret agents with occasional glimpses of vulnerability. Kusanagi was voiced by Tanaka Atsuko, already established as the dub voice of Nicole Kidman. Tanaka later dubbed Scarlett Johansson in the Japanese release of the live-action *Ghost in the Shell* remake (2017), an enjoyable travesty.

The compact anime, only 83 minutes long, had been skilfully arranged from select chapters of the source manga by Shirow Masamune. The strip was massively dense, but it had none of the sobriety Oshii brought to the film. However, viewers might have needed to have read Shirow's manga to catch some of the story's oblique points. In one scene, there's an unexplained raid at a mansion. The manga clarifies this belongs to an exiled foreign colonel who the Foreign Ministry wants deported, which is the secret reason for all the action and carnage in the film's first act.

**Andrew Osmond, *Sight & Sound*, Summer 2020**

GHOST IN THE SHELL (KÔKAKU KIDÔTAI)

Director: Mamoru Oshii  
©: Shirow Masamune, Kodansha, Bandai Visual, Manga Entertainment  
Production Company: Kodansha  
In association with: Bandai Visual, Manga Entertainment  
Executive Producers: Teruo Miyahara, Shigeru Watanabe, Andy Frain  
Producers: Yoshimasa Mizuo, Ken Matsumoto, Ken Iyadomi, Mitsuhsa Ishikawa  
Associate Producers: Laurence Guinness, Hiroshi Yamazaki, Yasushi Tsuge, Mana Ibuki  
Production Management: Ryuji Mitsumoto  
Production Co-ordinator: Haruo Mizuno  
International Co-ordinator: Tomio Yoshioka  
Screenplay: Kazunori Ito  
Based on the manga by: Shirow Masamune  
Director of Photography: Hisao Shirai  
Camera Operators: Studio Cosmos, Hisao Shirai, Motoaki Ikegami, Katsunori Maehara, Noriko Suzuki, Tetuo Ohtou, Yoichi Kuroda, Hiroshi Noguchi, Shinji Ikegami, Naohisa Haijima, Takashi Shimada, Yuuichi Ono, Toshikazu Hisano, Junji Yaitabashi, Natsuki Orihara, Kouichi Furusawa, Shoji Yazawa  
Special Effects: Riku Murakami, Marix, Yutaka Hoshiba, Toshio Hasegawa, Noriyuki Ohta  
Animation Director: Toshiko Nishikubo  
Key Animation Supervisors: Kazuchika Kise, Hiroyuki Okiura  
Key Animation: Toshiyuki Inoue, Hirotsugu Kawasaki, Tensai Okamura, Toyoaki Emura, Atsushi Takeuchi, Masahiro Andou, Kouichi Arai, Hisashi Eguchi, Yasushi Muraki, Mitsuo Iso, Masatsugu Arakawa, Kazunobu Hoshi, Manabu Tanzawa, Yasuhiro Ohshima, Akiharu Ishii, Miyako Yatsu, Kogi Ohkawa, Kumiko Kawana, Yoshiyuki Itou, Masayuki Yoshihara, Yuichi Tanaka, Tetsuhito Saitou, Kouji Komurakata, Mamoru Sasaki, Takashi Hashimoto, Hideki Hamasu, Kazuchika Kise, Hiroyuki Okiura  
Computer Animation Unit: Omnibus Japan  
Colour Setting: Kumiko Yusa  
Background Design: Takashi Watabe  
Background Drawings: Shuichi Hirata, Masatoshi Kai, Hisashi Ikeda, Yoji Takeshige, Hiromasa Ogura

Editor: Shuichi Kakesu  
Post-production: Jay Film  
Art Director: Hiromasa Ogura  
Character Design: Hiroyuki Okiura  
Mechanical Design: Shoji Kawamori, Atsushi Takeuchi  
Weapon Design: Mitsuo Iso  
Title Design: Thesedays, Teruhisa Tajima, Ayako Koike  
Titles: Maki Pro, Damson Studios  
Opticals: Tetsuo Kaneko, Masao Shibata  
Laboratory: Imagica, Technicolor  
Colour Timer: Hiroaki Hirabayashi  
Music: Kenji Kawai  
Sound Director: Kazuhiro Wakabayashi  
Re-recording Mixers: Paul Ratajczak, Kurt Kassulke  
Sound Effects: Kazutoshi Satou  
Publicists: Atsushi Kumagai, Tohru Nozaki  
Studio: 2 Production I.G. (1, 3 & 7 Studios)

Voice Cast

Akio Otsuka (Bateau)  
Atsuko Tanaka (Kusanagi)  
Tamio Oki (Aramaki)  
Iemasa Kayumi (Puppet Master)  
Koichi Yamadera (Togusa)  
Yutaka Nakano (Ishikawa)  
Tessho Genda (Nakamura)  
Masato Yamanouchi (minister)  
Shinji Ogawa (diplomat)  
Namaki Masakazu (Willis)  
Takashi Matsuyama (bad guy)  
Ginzo Matsuo (old man)  
Kazuhiro Yamaji (garbage collector A)  
Shigeru Chiba (garbage collector B)  
Hiroshi Yanaka (coroner)

Japan 1995©  
83 mins

CONTEMPORARY ANIME AUTEURS

The Girl Who Leapt through Time (Toki o Kakeru Shôjo)  
Sun 1 May 14:45; Sat 28 May 14:50  
Tokyo Godfathers (Tôkyô Goddofâzâzu)  
Sun 1 May 18:00; Sat 28 May 12:30  
Perfect Blue (Pâfekuto Burû)  
Mon 2 May 18:40; Sat 14 May 20:45  
The Place Promised in our Early Days (Kumo no Mukô, Yakusoku no Basho)  
Tue 3 May 18:00; Sun 22 May 15:00  
5 Centimeters per Second (Byôsoku 5 Senchimêtoru) + The Garden of Words (Kotonoha no Niwa)  
Tue 3 May 20:45; Sat 21 May 17:50  
Millennium Actress (Sennen Joyû)  
Wed 4 May 20:55; Sat 7 May 11:50; Mon 23 May 18:15 (BFI IMAX)  
Summer Wars (Samâ Uôzu)  
Sat 7 May 20:45; Sat 28 May 18:00  
Paprika (Papurika)  
Fri 13 May 20:40; Wed 18 May 20:45  
Wolf Children (Ôkami kodomo no Ame to Yuki)  
Sat 14 May 17:40; Sat 28 May 20:40

IMAX DOUBLE-BILL

Your Name (Kimi no Na wa)  
Sun 1 May 12:30; Sun 1 May 18:00  
Weathering with You (Tenki no Ko)  
Sun 1 May 15:15; Sun 1 May 20:30

ANIME CLASSICS PART 2

Tekkonkinkreet (Tekkon kinkurîto)  
Sun 1 May 12:10; Thu 5 May 20:50  
The Tale of the Princess Kaguya (Kaguya-hime no Monogatari)  
Tue 3 May 14:00; Tue 3 May 17:30 (all BFI IMAX)  
Akira  
Tue 3 May 20:30; Mon 23 May 15:00; Mon 23 May 20:30 (all BFI IMAX)  
Lupin the 3rd: The Castle of Cagliostro (Kariosutoro no Shiro)  
Wed 4 May 14:30; Tue 31 May 20:45  
Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa (Gekijô-ban Hagane no Renkinjutsushi: Shanbara o Yuku Mono)  
Fri 6 May 21:00; Mon 9 May 20:40  
Memories (Memorîzu)  
Sun 15 May 12:00; Tue 24 May 20:40  
Grave of the Fireflies (Hotaru no Haka)  
Thu 19 May 18:00 + intro by Alex Dudok de Wit, author of BFI Film Classics: Grave of the Fireflies; Fri 27 May 20:45

STUDIO GHIBLI

Princess Mononoke (Mononke-hime)  
Sun 15 May 17:45  
Castle in the Sky (Tenku no shnilo Rapyuta)  
Mon 16 May 20:30; Fri 20 May 20:30

This season was co-programmed by writer and academic Hanako Miyata

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