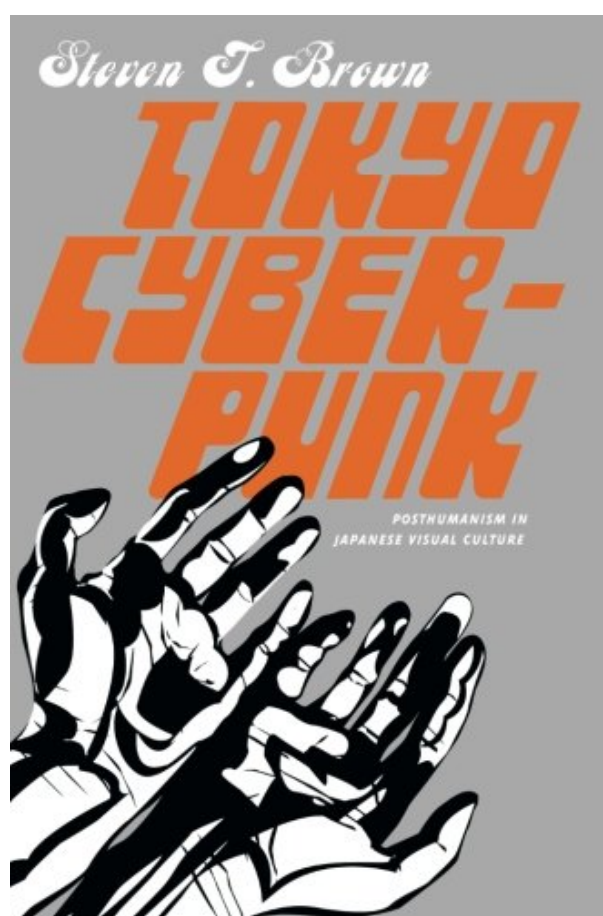


TOKYO CYBERPUNK: POSTHUMANISM IN JAPANESE VISUAL CULTURE BY STEVEN T. BROWN



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Engaging some of the most canonical and thought-provoking anime, manga, and science fiction films, Tokyo Cyberpunk offers insightful analysis of Japanese visual culture. Steven T. Brown draws new conclusions about the cultural flow of art, as well as important technological issues of the day.

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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Eyeopening and thoughtful study on some of Japan's most provocative contemporary media.

By Capt. Cos

Tokyo Cyberpunk is a thought provoking and extremely well researched text that explores not only themes of posthumanism in contemporary Japanese visual culture, but also carefully reveals how these themes are linked in a larger network of ideas and imagery. In addition to intricate implementation of philosophy and critical theory--from Deleuze and Guattari to Donna Haraway, from Nietzsche to Freud--Brown provides thorough descriptions of the film and anime texts with nuanced analysis. To do so, the author takes a "rhizomatic" approach, meaning that he explores the texts in relation to other texts, finding the common ground and compatible ideas in distinct media as they impact and borrow from each other. In this way, Brown reveals meanings in not just individual texts, but ideas between texts: recurrent and developing ideas across cultures and time.

This approach makes the text accessible in two important and distinct ways.

First, *Tokyo Cyberpunk* will be interesting for readers who have backgrounds in critical theory and philosophy, but are perhaps not familiar with Japanese culture and media (or even world cinema). The very detailed description of plots and accompanying scene analysis allows readers to engage with the applied ideas without a precondition of specific media and cultural literacy. Moreover, since Brown draws on extensive and diverse examples--from 17th century Japanese puppet plays to Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, from the films of David Cronenberg to the current hikkikomori phenomenon, from the sculptures and photographs of Hans Bellmer to reinterpretations of the Avalon myth of Arthurian legend--he opens up application of theory to diversity, encouraging the reader to draw from their own arsenal of visual examples, whatever their

background. The rhizomatic method prompts readers to also join in and say, "oh, this is also like xyz" from their own experience.

Second, although the seemingly heavy list of notoriously difficult theorists Brown employs (e.g. Deleuze, Nietzsche, Derrida, Descartes) might seem formidable to readers coming to Tokyo Cyberpunk from a background in Japanese pop culture, the author is also careful to use the theory in an approachable way. Inevitably, the book will, and should, attract readers with a primary interest in Japanese film and anime. Although the more theoretical sections of the text are dense, pop culture enthusiasts should not be afraid to take the plunge. Just as Tokyo Cyberpunk encourages academics of the lit crit crowd to explore visual culture, Brown's rhizomatic reading will prompt interest in larger philosophical ideas and thought perhaps previously unknown to the casual fan.

Readers from both camps could also take the rhizomatic path (paths?) as I did and read Tokyo Cyberpunk not just for the ideas and images in the book, but as a jumping off point to explore other texts and ideas beyond, but similar to, the text in their hands.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Informative, Exciting, and Inspiring

By Amazon Customer

After reading this book, I must say that I am extremely impressed with how it was easy to understand, read and stay interested in it. It isn't every day that I find a book like this and find that I am having a very hard time putting it down. It had its rocky parts but even those had extremely interesting and very fascinating information laced throughout them. I can see that with the knowledge of Tokyo cyberpunk, as a genre, one can probably not look at a doll on the shelf of a toy store the same ever again and maybe even not view the technology that we use day in and day out the same as well. Look at our campus, for example: we make everything very technological these days including not handing out syllabi by hand anymore. Instead, professors will simply upload it to the Internet for the students to find. Technology is all around us, in our lives and in some human beings, inside of our bodies (example: pacemakers). Perhaps Professor Brown is right - we all have a little cyborg in all of us.

2 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

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By Steven T. Brown

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Part II: Desiring Machines: Biomechanoid Eros and Other Techno-Fetishes in _Tetsuo: The Iron Man_ and Its Precursors

Part III: Consensual Hallucinations and the Phantoms of Electronic Presence in _Kairo_ and _Avalon_

Conclusion: Software in a Body: Critical Posthumanism and _Serial Experiments Lain_

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