

Handout for *Perfect Blue*

Things to consider while watching *Perfect Blue*

1. In general, we want to keep an eye on both form and content when we analyze films we are watching this semester. In other words, beyond simply the story line by itself (which would reduce the film to a script), we want to be able to appreciate the story in the context of the animated film medium. For *Perfect Blue*, this is particularly interesting since it was originally conceived as a live-action film but now most commentators recognize what it gains from having been animated instead. It is here where we can pause a moment to consider elements of animation that relate it to and set it apart from live-action cinema. In other words, what does animation share with live-action cinema, what does it lack in comparison to live-action film, and what does it have that live-action doesn't? How do attributes of animation benefit the theme and the storytelling in *Perfect Blue*?

2. We also need to consider a full range of narrative techniques in *Perfect Blue* and the other works we will be viewing. In *Perfect Blue*, the way director Kon and screenwriter Murai tell the story aids in confusing reality and illusion. The narrative is nested within a series of frames that serve to fold reality upon illusion and back again. Keep an eye on this as you watch. This aspect of the film feeds the theme of "performance" of self that Susan Napier picks up on in her essay on Kon, which we are reading for Thursday. Be prepared to discuss how the film presents the issue of the performance of self (or selves).

Jot thoughts down and come to class Thursday prepared to comment. Also respond to two or more of the questions in the discussion forum for *Perfect Blue* at figal-sensei.org