The film *Paprika* was released in 2006, directed and co-written by Satoshi Kon. This was a year when technology perhaps first started to exponentially advance, and people started questioning the ethical and moral implications of these advancements. It was also a time where people could finally begin to come to terms with the fact that things could happen that they always believed were impossible; for example, the Wii came out in 2005, allowing direct physical interaction with a virtual picture—the first example of technology enabling the reality and non-reality coming together. This is also an era in which the internet started becoming incredibly popular, and was a completely new way for people to communicate beyond any way that used to exist. The “aliens” in *Paprika*, though it may be not so obvious, are those from the dreamworld, or the non-reality, characters such as Paprika herself, as well as others that exist only in the dream world and may or may not represent characters in real life. The film uses aliens to convey a message about technology: the advancement in technology can be helpful and positive, but it can come with consequences if it is not carefully handled.

The film also makes interesting use of the Internet. The internet is used as a rendezvous for illegal use of Paprika’s dream-entering therapy, and illegal use of the DC mini device. At the time of the film’s release, the Internet was just becoming a widely used and popular tool. It was a way that many people could communicate with each other without being physically present. In a similar vein, the film revolves around the DC mini, technology that allows one to enter another’s dreams: a way to communicate that is completely beyond what was possible before the invention of the device.

The “aliens” depicted in the film were characters who existed within the collective dream world, or within people’s individual dreams. These characters had surreal qualities, spoke very oddly and nonsensically, and were sometimes a combination of many toys and/or household objects and/or people. Though they seemed familiar at first, their alien-ness was obvious after interaction with them; they were very different from reality. This applies to Paprika as well; she is an alien because she exists in the realm of people’s dreams, and she is much more different than her reality-alter-ego. This specific message was appropriate to convey using aliens, because it involves a “non-reality”. The surrealism and oddity, the unfamiliarity of the aliens really conveyed the feeling of panic and disturbance as reality merged with nonreality, a consequence of mishandling advanced technology. Using brainwashed humans may
have been effective, but would not have caused the same emotional reaction, and invoked the same panic about technology and its advancement.