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Unmasking Mecha Identities; Visual Media Perspectives on Posthumanism in Japanese Popular Culture

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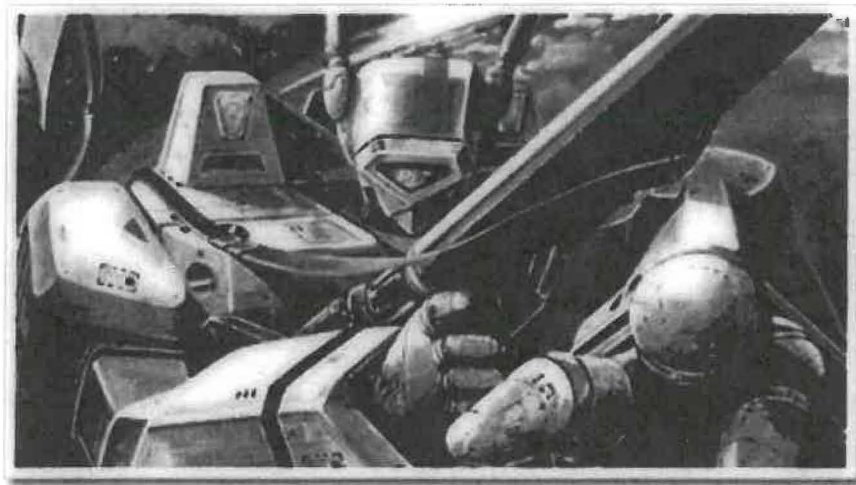
By
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About the Author

My name is Gregory Schuster. I'm a senior at the University of Redlands and graduated in 2010. I received two degrees, a BS in Global Business and a BA in Asian Studies, with an emphasis on Japanese Culture and Language Studies.

I have always been really interested in Japanese culture; I think a lot of this stems from the fact that I was born in Japan, but not raised there, so my origins have often been murky and mysterious. Growing up, I was very eager to find out as much as I could about Japan and its society. When I was a child my family hosted a foreign exchange student named Yoko. I remember that she seemed extremely majestic, but considering I was about 4 or 5 and I think she was in the 8th grade, this all is a bit unclear. While she didn't stay long, she did leave us with souvenirs: kimono, chopsticks, Japanese art, etc. These presents would help to build my parents already lavish collection of Japanese artifacts and help turn our house into a Japanese history and art museum.

Not too long after that, my cousin Kim introduced me to animé with the series *Tenchi Muyo*. I had already seen lots of Americanized animé such as *Pokémon*, but this would mark the first series that I ever saw with subtitles and it changed the way I would watch animé from then on. At that time, I remember really like the Miyazaki films *My Neighbor Totoro* and *Kiki's Delivery Service*.

During middle school and high school, my friends also started to get into animé and video games. We would get together after school and watch VHS tapes that we picked up on rental from Blockbuster. At the time, we hadn't discovered the glories of watching animé over the internet and so we spent most of our time watching the same movies over and over again. I've seen *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*, *Princess Mononoke*, *Akira*, and *Ghost in the Shell* more times than I can count because they were the vast majority of the very small collection of Japanese animated films available for rent at the time.

In high school, myself, and all my friends, were able to purchase computers for ourselves. This opened up the possibility for watching animé online, both legally, and not so legally. We watched stuff on YouTube and downloaded what we couldn't. During this time period in my life, I started getting thoroughly entrenched in animé and I can honestly say I became a "fan". At the time, I would probably have been considered an *otaku* by just about anybody, but I tried to blend in with the rest of the population as much as possible.

For my 18th birthday, my parents took me on a ten day trip back to Japan. This was the vacation of a life time. We spent about 6 days in the greater Tokyo area and then spent another 4 in Kyoto and Nara. I'll never forget that trip. We went to temples, shrines, had traditional Japanese food, and even went to the Miyazaki museum where I saw all kinds of awesome stuff from some of his best films.

After spending this very short period of time in Japan, I was immediately hooked and had to go back and study the country on a more formal basis. I decided that I wanted to focus my college course work on studying Japan, but also take my study to a level beyond simply a major in Japanese language. I decided to attend the University of Redlands and do a double major in Global Business and Asian Studies.

My first year at the University of Redlands, I met another student Joey Beaudette. He shared my love of animé, Japanese culture, and desire to learn the language. Together, we formed the Japanese cultural society here in order to help promote study of the Japanese language through weekly language dinners, which students could attend in order to gain outside the classroom experience speaking Japanese. During my first semester, I took language classes under Dr. Kota Inoue, a new teacher at the University of Redlands who was also teaching classes on Japanese literature as well. He would become my mentor for the next four years and help me learn the language as well as counsel me in much of my Japanese studies side of my double degree.

The summer of my second year in college, I got the chance to participate in the Japan American Student's Conference. This student run conference was a place to interact with peers in Asian Studies throughout the United States as well as get to know some of the top echelon of students in Japan. With this talented group of people, I got to travel around the states, discussing issues that ranged from politics to pop culture. It turned out to be a great chance to meet lots of fantastic colleagues who would remain my friends in the years ahead.

As a junior, I was awarded the opportunity to study abroad for a year to a Japanese school. I chose to study at Reitaku University, a sister school to the University of Redlands, in Chiba prefecture. This small college offered a very similar feel to that of the University of Redlands and gave me the chance to really expand my Japanese language abilities as well as learn more about Japanese culture, first hand, as well as get to know the Japanese people.

While I was studying abroad, I met Fumiko Tomioka. After she finally accepted my invites to go out, we hit it off really fast. We got married near the end of my Study abroad and we had our first son, Roy, this December.

If you couldn't tell, that's me in Odaiba trying to hold a 100 ft tall *Gundam* in the palm of my hand.

One of the first things that sparked my desire to do this project, and study the way Japan views machines in the media was seeing a Giant statute of a *Gundam* erected in Odaiba, outside of central Tokyo. I thought it was fascinating the way the Japanese put this animated series on a pedestal. This initial interest fueled my thirst to understand more about Japan's robotics industry, as well as the multiple genres of animé that depict robots.

I'm not sure when this project turned into a labor of love, but it has certainly evolved over the last year. Although it has gone through many changes, I was able to remain very close to the heart of my initial proposal and do exactly what I wanted to do: watch animé and write about it. I hope that you get as much from reading this paper as I did from writing it. To paraphrase a line from Spike Spiegel, writing this has felt like a dream I'll never wake up from. It's been fun.

Sincerely,
Gregory P. Schuster

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1. Thesis Statement

Current Japanese animation has shifted to present posthumanism as a formative tool towards the establishment of personal identity, rather than simply a utopian dream, or a nightmare of fear, which is in contrast with prior works of Japanese visual and print science fiction from the 1930's to 1990's, which depicted posthumanity as, at the least, ambiguous or even destructive towards human identity; this shift can be seen beginning with Japan's earliest science fiction works and is suggestive of a gradual acceptance and integration of the mechanical into the self.

Analysis of posthumanity in popular media in other parts of the world, namely the United States, shows posthumanism from a polarizing perspective of either, uncertainty and fear, or idealist fantasy, which suggest that America has yet to establish the same level of conceptual paradigm which has been achieved by the Japanese in the 21st century. From this analysis, it would seem as though the general trend of acceptance and affinity for posthumanity could be represented by an ascending linearity, , the general trend is that humanity, especially Japan, is moving closer and closer to robots and identification with them as identity forming tools. This trend suggests a paradigm shift where ideological and cultural constructs are helping to move humans and machines closer together.

As opposed to most of the work that has been done in the study of animé, this thesis is an attempt to analyze new animé narratives which have had very little exposure in terms of academic study. It is not simply about putting robots, machines, or *mecha* on a pedestal, but is rather meant to decode the shifting portrayal of robots

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within popular culture and then try to understand how these shifts differ across borders, from the United States to Japan.

2. Introduction and Research Methodology

The animé works chosen for this research and analytical project represent the most prolific category of robot and posthuman representative works: the *mecha* genre. From within that genre pieces were chosen which had been produced in the last five years. The three pieces chosen to be the primary focus of this thesis are: ***Eureka Seven*** (2005), ***Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion*** (2006), and ***Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*** (2007).

There were several criteria used when determining which animé would be chosen for this study. First and foremost, each piece had to present posthumanism through the *mecha* lens. Second, the main pieces for analysis within this project were all works which had relatively little, or absolutely no critical analysis by experts in the field; this allowed for new and productive research to be possible, rather than simply restating the opinions of the select group of experts in the animé field throughout this thesis. Third, pieces were chosen from the last five years; the reason for a time cut-off is to, first, limit the scope on what can be analyzed, and second to make this thesis more pertinent to current events. Because of the quickly changing and evolving technological world, views on technology also change rapidly. Going back further than five years would thus constitute presenting more historical views on this subject rather than focusing on current trends in posthuman narratives within animé. Historical narratives and their importance for the *mecha* genre will be discussed during the later parts of this research thesis in brevity.

PART I – RESEARCH

3. Why Anime?

Japanese Animation, or animé, has become an internationally respected and increasingly globally consumed media form. One of the reasons for the prevalence of this medium is the historical lack of a money-making domestic live action film industry. In the introduction to her work entitled *Animé: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, Susan Napier had this to say about animé as a medium:

> "For those interested in Japanese culture, it is a richly fascinating contemporary Japanese art form with a distinctive narrative and visual aesthetic that both harks back to traditional Japanese culture and moves forward to the cutting edge of art and media. Furthermore, animé, with its enormous breadth of subject material is also a useful mirror on contemporary Japanese society, offering an array of insights into the significant issues, dreams, and nightmares of the day."[i]

However, some critics would say that animé is even more than that. Steven Brown has suggested that animé goes beyond the "pale reflection of national cinema" to something more international. This opinion would not be all together mistaken. Animé has a huge following in its home market; however, it has been adopted into the mainstream all over the world. Animé can be found virtually everywhere in the United States. The recent *Astroboy, Dragonball Z*, and the upcoming *Cowboy Bebop* are examples of classic animé that have been well recognized and consumed globally that have now been, or soon will be, made into feature length, Hollywood motion pictures. The upcoming *Cowboy Bebop* film will star a blockbuster cast, including Keanu Reeves[ii], of the immensely successful *Matrix* Trilogy. Other Hollywood actors have taken an interest in animé and are pushing for their own adaptations of appreciated works. Leonardo Di Caprio has played a major role in the creation of the upcoming *Akira* live action re-make. He has even been rumored to have a starring role in the film.[iii]

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But, despite its global reach, animé continues to reflect Japan's national identity; it provides an image of Japan to the outside world and has helped to create, in Japan, a world described by Napier as a Fantasyscape.[iv] Japan becomes a country of the imagination and possibility, which has helped to build the myth of Japan, something that varies from person to person. As will be explained later on, the "myth" of Japan is not something that has simply developed on its own, but has been actively fueled by the Japanese government and the promotion of animé as a highly "Japanese" cultural product.

The ability of animé to have a varied and lasting affect on different individuals stems from its ability to reflect not only the Japanese national identity, but a universal human concern about the world which goes beyond a single cultural tradition. Despite many of the plots in animé taking on fantastic or unreal situations, the worlds that are built through animé take on a sense of realism and validity through the painstaking process of staying true to the details of the real world, even though the very media that is used to build animé is capable of total falsification of sensory perception. One such example of this sensory overload, could be seen in the outrageous work of *Tekkonkinkreet*. This film has a truly unique visual style which borders on the impressionistic; however, the film has a startling way of depicting a very colorful reality. Scenes, like those in which a member of the *yakuza*, lies in bed with his prostitute girlfriend, as he smokes a cigarette and she explains that she is pregnant, give the narrative and the imagery some undeniable sense of being rooted in the truth of our world. Although the rest of the film may be more akin to an insane romp of visual exploitation, these scenes of realism ground the viewer and make a connection. This

example is of course the most extreme; the vast majority of animé does not push the boundary of surrealism nearly as far as *Tekkonkinkreet* does. The "Slice of Life" animé genre, for instance, tries to portray real life as accurately and distinctly as possible. In her book, *From Impression to Animé,* Napier writes about how we, as a viewing audience, can connect to animé, even if we come from vastly different cultures, because despite the authentic quality of the narrative or of the imagery, what we are seeing is inherently unreal. The medium with which the narrative is presented is inauthentic; it is a fabrication. Because animé is a concocted fiction of visualization, it allows foreign peoples to be swept up in the "Fantasyscape" while still remaining very true to real Japanese culture and life.

Some analysts have noted that animé, when originally imported to the United States was made more American in style and treatment of culturally specific constructs, but today, this medium is retaining its Japanese characteristics after being shifted into the new market. The "Japanese origins" present in anime are being used as a "hook to reel" in the target audience. The fact that these series come from Japan and have Japanese themes has become a facet of the marketing strategy for companies that produce animé and distribute it globally.[v]

3.1 Animé Genres

The genres of animé vary just as the genres of any other visual media may vary. Animé does however proliferate some genres more than others. Among the genres which could be considered highly represented within animé as a medium are the narratives which interact with technology. Among these technological stories, those which delve into the world of posthumanity are highly prevalent. Posthumanity, as

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explained by Sharalyn Orbaugh in her essay entitled "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis,"[vi] is a condition where humans break down their boundaries and exceed their limitations through union with a machine. This state is most clearly seen in animé which probe into the world of the cyborg, in a physical union of man and machine where the biological human is extended by the mechanical in a true synthesis. Brian Ruh, in the anthology *Cinema Animé,* explains that, "the popular culture cyborg plays a performative role in media culture, helping to construct and negotiate a sense of self."[vii] This concept will be discussed significantly throughout this work, as it represents the bulk of the research for this thesis, but will be analyzed, not from the cyborg view-point, but from a similar standpoint in a related genre as posthumanity can easily be seen in many other types of animé which delve into the world of the futuristic technological.

Mecha is a genre which explores the union of man and machine in a less permanent or physical merging than that of the cyborg. In the *mecha* genre, humans are seen riding inside massive armored battle suits, much in the same way that a soldier flies a jet or drives a tank. However, the *mecha* is not simply a tool for destruction. Jets, tanks, cars, these are all tools which we as humans use in some way to achieve an end. In the case of warfare, jets are used as highly mobile and destructive killing machines. From this literal standpoint, *mecha* are very similar. The difference between these two war engines comes in their form and the meaning derived from that form. *Mecha* are innately human in their visual depiction. For the most part, they have two legs, two arms, and usually have some discernable head. The extremely "human" representation of the *mecha* is used to show humanity being empowered. The *mecha* is not simply a tool of war; it is a giant metal skin that creates a super-soldier. It

empowers the pilot, rather than simply enabling them to move more quickly, or fly. The core of *mecha* is the elevation of humanity. The battle suit extends the attack and defense capabilities of the human being and offers them the opportunity to utilize extremely potent and destructive weapons, but this is simply the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

One of the reasons that the *mecha* genre is growing more and more important is its soon-to-become realism. Although we see *mecha* as science fiction, thinking of robots being used in warfare as extremely far-fetched, this is not entirely the case. Current trends in science and the evolution of robotics have begun shifting heavily to mechanized warfare. By the year 2005, there were already more than 5,000 robots fighting in Iraq; this number has gone up significantly since then.[viii] These robots vary between those used to disarm bombs, to very different kinds of robots, which actually have a battlefield presence. For example, SWORDS, can be mounted with machine guns or missiles and are highly capable in combat, using tank-treads for mobility. Also, huge numbers of remote controlled drones fly over the skies of battle each day spying on the enemy proving intelligence to bases in the United States.[ix]

3.2 Super Robot vs. Real Robot

The *mecha* genre is broken down into two distinct subgenres: *Super Robot* and *Real Robot*. *Super Robot* animé depicts massive armored battle suits in mythic and legendary ways that go against the commonly accepted expectations of the societies in which these robots appear. One example of *Super Robot* animé can be seen in the series *Rah Xephon*. In the series, this *mecha*, (named for the title) is a legendary entity unto itself. It transcends human creation and expectation and ultimately is used to bring

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about a massive Armageddon-like scenario. On the very opposite end of the spectrum, *Real Robot*, represents robots in more casual terms; although they are still massive armored mechanical incarnations, they are viewed by the world, within the animé, as accepted technological advancements as the new replacement for other war machines. Within this sub-genre, mankind is the father of the *mecha*. He designed it and gave birth to it as a tool used to enhance humanity, and, more importantly, the protagonist. Many animé enthusiasts have noted that the line between these two genres is getting thinner and thinner and may be on the way to disappearing all-together. In all three of the series which are analyzed here, it becomes incredibly difficult to figure out exactly which of these sub-genre is being represented; but, just as this distinction is being more difficult to determine, so too is the purpose in having a distinction at all. These two sub-genres now typically are used to label the polar ends of the spectrum between which most animé falls.

Although these two genres do not depict the cyborg literally, their purpose can often be seen in a very similar manner; in addition to the cyborg, the *mecha* can serve as a potent device to explore identity and come to a sense of self-realization.

3.3 On the Distinction between Robots and *Mecha*

One very important thing to remember is the distinction between robots, in the colloquial sense and the terms *real robot*, *giant robot*, and *super robot*, when used in terms of *mecha*. The robot, on its own, is an autonomous unit which is mechanical in nature and is most of the time, manmade. Sometimes the robot is intelligent, sometimes it is not, but the thing to emphasize is the autonomy from human beings and the ability of a robot to function independent of human contact. When talking about

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mecha, people often use the term robot in a very different way; here, it is used simply as a synonym for *mecha*, mechanical entities which rely on human beings to achieve anima and meaning. *Mecha* usually do not act on their own; they may have their own consciousness or their own will, but without a human being to manipulate the *mecha*, the machine cannot act or affect the world.

3.4 Posthumanity and Real World Conceptualization

Thinking about posthumanity as an extension of the boundaries and limitations of humanity within animé also allows the viewer to extrapolate some meaning to posthumanity in the real world. As Napier explains in an essay entitled "Panic Sites", science fiction, in Japan, "serves to dafamiliarize and restructure our experience of our own present and to do so in specific ways distinct from all other forms of defamiliarization."[x] Because animé has an uncanny way of representing the real world, even from a very unreal or even surreal viewpoint, we tend to be able to derive things about the real world from the things we see in animé. Therefore the constructs within posthuman animé can be used to derive truths about the world around us. Seeing posthumanity as more than simply the very literal merger of man and machine through the cyborg in the visual media of Japan infers that posthumanity in the real world goes beyond this very literal interpretation as well. Brian Ruh notes in his examination of the animé *FLCL* the popularity and importance of robots within Japanese culture. He references the writer Frederik L. Schodt and his revelation that the Japanese people often describe their country as *robotto okoku* (robot kingdom).[xi] This country has a long history of affiliation with robotics going back hundreds of years to the 17th century

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karakuri, mechanical wind-up automata which we used to prepare and serve tea in a not-so-traditional tea ceremony.[xii]

From a non-literal point of view, the posthuman in the real world could be used to describe the current trend between humans and robots. Robots serve human beings in society in numerous ways. They have been of great importance to Japan's manufacturing industry since the 1970's. However current trends suggest an increasing closeness between human and machine; as the robot and the human work more closely and in a greater variety of ways we are beginning to reach a point where, despite the fact that physical union is not achieved, we must begin to see ourselves in a posthuman light.

One of the ways in which this closeness is manifesting in Japan, and in other countries around the world, is the advent of a new breed of robot: the service robot. These machines work extremely closely with humans on even personal levels. While manufacturing, or dedicated purpose robots, operate predominantly in factories where they are used to out-power and out-speed human beings for the production of goods, service robots work in the home or in the field to do tasks other than those of mass manufacturing. Examples of service robots range from those used by bomb squads to disarm potentially dangerous explosives to robotic vacuum cleaners which automatically clean the home. The latter of these two examples is referred to as the domestic use service robot. These robots are personally owned and can be bought for relatively little money (compared to the cost of the average manufacturing robot or even of the cost to pay a house keeper on a regularly basis). These machines are gathering increasingly

more and more popularity in Japan (as well as other countries), enough so that they have even appeared on popular game shows as prizes to winning contestants.

Despite the purpose of these service robots being extremely similar to their industrial counterparts in many cases, that being increased efficiency in a certain task, the sociological importance is much greater. While these domestic robots might simply provide a faster way to do a difficult task, or a potentially deadly task, they represent a shift in robotic acceptance. These machines are personally owned and work inside the home to help destroy the barriers of human capability. At the very least, these machines increase efficiency and personal time management, but they are gradually moving beyond the simple ability to provide people with more spare time as housework is taken care of by an electric maid. Some domestic use service robots are taking care of the elderly and are capable of rescuing an invalid in case of emergency. The degree by which technology has evolved over the last twenty years in the field of robotics is startling. Society has reached that point in most science fiction novels where humanity begins to question its superiority: are the robots making us obsolete? This question is one posed time and time again in literature depicting a sort of robot apocalypse. Today, more than ever, we are seeing technology truly change how we think of ourselves as humans and how through technology we begin to define our own identity. In the introduction to *Mechademia Volume 3: The Limits of the Human*, Frenchy Lunning notes:

> "Everyone, regardless of his or her position in culture or location on the earth, is aware of a distinct shift in the idea of what is human. Those who fear this change rage against science and technology as the harbingers of what is, from another point of view, the inevitable evolution of humanity. Those who embrace this change are unsure of what to call this moment, how to summarize the movement, when to say, "This is it." And within this rupture in history, wars are being fought with these changes as the unspeakable, unsayable, unrecognizable, and unpronounceable subtext."[xiii]

He is describing, in some ways, this very phenomenon. Robots, and technology

in general, have come so far that soon we may be forced to question how much we can

rely on machines, or if we should rely on them at all. One recent animé series called

Time of Eve deals with exactly this shift regarding how humans and machines relate. It

is set in the future where androids (human shaped robots) cohabitate with human

beings, performing menial tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and shopping; in this

posthuman future, the world questions the way robots and humans are building

relationships. The series provides several intertextual references to other works in

American posthuman science fiction and film, addressing these concerns directly. One

reference to the film *Bladerunner*, by Ridly Scott, addresses the paranoia regarding

robots walking around the world, acting and looking like human beings; however, this

reference is minor when compared to the overarching plot of the work which is a

response to Isaac Asimov's three laws of robotics, which were coined in the pinnacle

science fiction classic *I, Robot*. These three laws state:

1. A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
2. A robot must obey any orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
3. A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.xiv

Time of Eve, approaches these laws, examines them from several angles, and

then finds the grey area where they fail, and where that failure could actually lead to

good, rather than bad results. One of these grey areas is a law which is enacted over a

particular café, where most of the narrative takes place. This law bans discrimination

between androids and human beings. Because of this law, androids are able to

seamlessly mix with the humans in the café and act more "human". The narrative of the

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series is encapsulated in vignettes; each episode fleshes out the characters which have been introduced in episode one. The theme of the series deals with how humans and machines are building relationships with one another, relying on each other, and adapting to the changing world where machines have an important role in everyday life. Although the series begins from a viewpoint of paranoia and unease, it ends on a very hopeful note as we see things changing, perhaps for the good, with machines being accepted and gaining independence. It also depicts the emergence of identity development as the main character Rikuo throws of his fear of machines and, with the help of his android maid Sammy, continues down the path of becoming a pianist.

Time of Eve very accurately depicts the trend in current animé. This shift is seen very well in those series which depict *mecha*, the culmination of the technological, as not something which will result in humanities ultimate destruction, or as something which will bring all humanity into a golden era of perfection and efficiency. What recent animé seems to show is a change in how we look at "the machine" from something we fear, into something with which we can identify and through which we can develop our own identity.

Finally, the very nature and popularity of *mecha* as a genre implicates a shift towards humans and robots having a closer relationship; the interdependence of *mecha* and humans seems to elicit an especially important shift in the world from robots as others to robots as part of the self.

4. Explanation of Terms and Concepts

4.1 *Mecha* Origins

There has been much speculation as to the true origins of the *Mecha* genre. Some animé scholars trace its roots back to Robert A. Heinlein's "Starship Troopers", the novel written in 1959, which "...introduced the concept of the 'powered suit'." In his essay, entitled "*Gundam* and the Future of Japanoid Art", Takayumi Tatsumi explains the impact that this novel had on the Japanese science fiction and animé community. The image of the armored battle suit on the cover of the book would become the archetype for the design of future *mecha*, especially those of the long-running *Gundam* series. Also, he elaborates on the origins of the battle-suit/pilot relationship, explaining that in Heinlein's world, the machine/battle-suit is able to interpret the thoughts of the pilot and perform accordingly. [xv]

Although Heinlein has had a large affect on the *mecha* genre, his influence does not stand as the sole force which has vitalized and added popularity to this genre in Japan. One of the major comparisons made between the East and the West is the similarity between *mecha* and superheroes. In an interview with Crispin Freeman, a world renowned American animé voice actor, famous for portraying roles in series such as *Hellsing* and *The Big O*, he explains that both of these genres possess divine roots. While superheroes, in the mind of the West, stem from Christian backgrounds, the *mecha* genre draws some of its inspiration from Shinto mythology and tradition. He explains that the, "giant robot comes from [a]...protean and elemental notion of divine energy. Power that can manifest itself in mechanical form."[xvi]

Technology and machines have been part of Japanese fiction for almost 100 years. *Mecha* was born during the middle of Japan's science fiction life. The origins of robots and technology in Japanese science fiction came during the 1930's during Japan's "age of machines (*kikai jidai*)".[xvii] This explosion of robot fantasy and machine related fiction came when Japan was in the midst of its mechanization period and was seeing immense economic growth at the cost of social change. This period also was characteristically fearful of the power that machines offered; writers, such as Yumeno Kyusaku rebelled against the mechanical age. In Yumeno's *Dogura Magura*, his main character has been described by some as the anti-robot who tries to re-establish the human in an age where machines are dominant.[xviii]

Even in this early work by Yumeno, we see the concept of posthumanity coming into the mainstream and, "anxiety over bodily mechanization so central in cyberpunk is already present."[xix] The concept of posthumanity was born far earlier than the term cyborg coined by Manfred E. Clynes and Nathan S. Kline during the 1960's, which we use to traditionally describe the fusion of man and machine.[xx] Patrick Parrinder describes some of the places that posthumanity can be seen in early 20th century fiction:

> "In the year 1923, Karel Kapek's play *R. U. R.* gave the English language the word robot, E. V. Odle published what has been called the first cyborg novel, H. G. Wells portrayed a utopian future in *Men Like Gods*, and J. B. S. Haldane inaugurated the 'Today and To-morrow' series which marks the beginning of the discipline of futurology. Haldane's *Daedalus* and the novel it influenced, Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World,* foresee a future of cloned individuals who are at least neo-human if not exactly post-human."[xxi]

Because the *mecha* genre places such a huge emphasis on war and battles, many series within the genre choose to use this aspect of the construct to explore those narratives in order to analyze or address certain feelings about war.

In order to better understand the trends of *mecha* and human-robot relationships, it is highly necessary to understand how they have existed in the past; in Japan, the *mecha* genre, and other similar science fiction genres, arose from the 1960-1970's. The timelines on the following two pages show important *mecha* anime over the last sixty years.

By no means is the following timeline comprehensive. It does however depict the vast majority of *mecha* animé which fall into the *Super Robot* and *Giant Robot* categories and it shows how these two genres have exploded over the last thirty years. All of these pieces however, came on the shirt tails of very important works in Japanese science fiction. The two most important of these works were *Astroboy* (1952) and *Godzilla* (1954).

Tetsuwan Atomu, or, in America, *Astroboy*, was the groundbreaking fist masterpiece in robot science fiction *manga*. The creator of this story, Tezuka Osamu, has been said to have had a "life-long preoccupation with the fraught relationship between humanity and its others."[xxii] The others, referred to in this quote are the robots which populate his fictional worlds. Many scholars of Tezuka's works note that *Astroboy* actually began as a stand alone series with a decidedly different plot. This series, known as *Ambassador Atom*, was published in 1951 and served as a parable of the US-Japan peace treaty signings which were happening in the same year. This narrative established a precedent for the use of robots in helping to solve problems of the nation; though in the *manga*, the character *Atomu* is an ambassador between the Earth and an alien race, he is in fact a symbol for the Japanese and their desire for peace in reaction to one of the most devastating wars in human history: WWII.[xxiii]

Timeline of *Mecha* Animé

•Muteki Choujin Zanbot 3
•Superhuman Combat Team Baratack
•Choudenji Machine Voltes V
•Ginguiser
•Wakusei Robo Dangard A
•Gasshin Sentai Mechander Robo
•Koutetsu Jeeg
•Yuusha Raideen
•Getter Robo G
•Ufo Robo Grendizer

| 1955 | 1960 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 |

•Mazinger Z
•Astrogagner

•Astroboy
•Godzilla

•Tetsujin 28

•Geter Robo
•Great Mazinger

•Taiyou no Kiba Dougram
•Mobile Suit Gundam - The Movie Trilogy
•Mobile Suit Gundam

•Daiku Maryo Gaiking
•Gowapper 5 Godam
•Choudenji Robo Combattler V
•Groizer X
•Blocker Gundan IV Machine Blaster
•Toshi Gordian
•Mirai Robo Daltanias
•Daikengo

- Robotech
- Super Dimension Cavalry Southern Cross
- Heavy Metal L-Gaim
- Ginga Hyouryuu Vifam
- Genesis Climber Mospeada
- Super Dimension Century Orguss
- Armored Trooper Votoms
- Super Dimension Fortress Macross
- Sentou Mecha Xabungle

- Transformers: Victory
- Transformers: Super God Masterforce
- Gunbuster
- Dangaioh
- Transformers: The Headmasters
- Voltron: Fleet of Doom
- Transformers: The Movie
- Transformers: Scramble City

- Key the Metal Idol
- Macross 7
- Macross Plus
- Mobile Fighter G Gundam
- Patlabor 2: The Movie
- Mobile Suit Victory Gundam
- Kishin Corps
- Mobile Suit Gundam F91
- Bubblegum Crash
- Patlabor The Mobile Police: The New Files

- Sakura Taisen: Le Nouveau Paris
- Fafner
- Burst Angel
- Mars Daybreak
- Zoids: Fuzors
- Full Metal Panic? Fumoffu
- Sakura Taisen: Ecole de Paris
- Gunparade March
- Macross Zero
- Mobile Suit Gundam Seed
- Voices of a Distant Star
- Full Metal Panic!
- Patlabor WXIII
- Geneshaft
- Zoids/ZERO
- Vandread
- Sakura Wars
- Pilot Candidate

- Gunbuster 2
- Vandread: The Second Stage
- MazinKaiser
- Vandread
- FLCL

- Bokurano
- Gurren Lagann
- Gunbuster vs Diebuster Aim for the Top! The GATTAI!!

1985   1990   1995   2000   2005   2010

- Sengoku Majin GoShogun
- Voltron

- Patlabor The Mobile Police
- Patlabor: The Movie
- Mobile Suit Gundam 0080: War in the Pocket
- Madox-01
- Patlabor The Mobile Police
- Mobile Suit Gundam: Char's Counterattack
- Armor Hunter Mellowlink
- Gall Force 2 - Destruction
- Bubblegum Crisis
- Kiko Senki Dragonar
- Delpower X Bakuhatsu Miracle Genki!
- Gall Force - Eternal Story
- Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ

- Sakura Wars 2
- Blue Gender
- Zoids
- Dual! Parallel Trouble Adventure
- AD Police
- Turn A Gundam
- Bubblegum Crisis: Tokyo 2040
- Gasaraki
- Ginga Hyouryuu Vifam 13
- Sakura Wars
- Mobile Suit Gundam Wing: Endless Waltz
- Martian Successor Nadesico
- After War Gundam X
- Mobile Suit Gundam: The 08th MS Team
- Neon Genesis Evangelion
- Mobile Suit Gundam Wing

- Mobile Suit Gundam 00 Special Edition
- Mobile Suit Gundam 00 Second Season
- Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion R2
- Macross Frontier
- Mobile Suit Gundam 00
- Negadon: The Monster from Mars
- Bokurano
- Sakura Taisen: New York NY.
- Strain: Strategic Armored Infantry
- Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion
- Flag
- Full Metal Panic! The Second Raid
- Eureka Seven
- Jinki:Extend

World War II became the focus of an entire literary movement in Japan. The defeat of the Japanese was a huge event and would totally change the face of not only the Japanese landscape, but their entire culture and civilization. With the end of WWII came the fall of state Shinto, the national religion during the period, which had risen to prominence during the *Meji* period in the late 1800's. Also, the end of WWII meant the end of the Japanese military forces and the occupation of Japan by the American army; Japan would be relegated to a self-defense force and would no longer have a military capable of offensive attacks. Finally, the atomic bombs, which destroyed the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, rocked the world, and would become the focus of Japanese literature and films even to this day.

One of the first post-war atomic bomb response works in popular media was the film *Godzilla*. This piece can easily be recognizable as an allegory for nuclear destruction; the giant radioactive monster Godzilla wreaks havoc on the entirety of Japan and must be stopped at all costs. This story sparked an entire "monster movie" generation and was widely accepted both in Japan and abroad. The original film was adapted and came to the United States in 1956 and was thereafter popularized in the US through the time of the Cold War, when nuclear proliferation was becoming a global concern.[xxiv]

Astroboy and *Godzilla* would be only the beginning. There was a significant literary movement following the Second World War as authors attempted to deal with the varied emotions that had been carried over from the Japanese defeat, as well as new emotions arising from the process of moving forward.[xxv] Marco Pellitteri points out that many *mecha* anime, produced in the 1960's and 1970's were focused around

dealing with the emotions of the Japanese carried over from WWII as well.[xxvi] Pellitteri

points to three pieces in particular which are extremely important in understanding the

relationship of *mecha* to this postwar sentimentality: *Mazinger Z, Great Mazinger,* and

UFO Robot Grendazier. Together, these three pieces form the *Mazinsaga* trilogy which

would be a hallmark for *mecha* genre and establish many standards for postwar

narratives in animé which were to come.

In all three pieces within this series, the *mecha* serves to help reestablish

national identity and procure victory for the Japanese. In the first two parts of this trilogy,

the *mecha* serve to fight off the metaphorical West and establish patriotic victory. Part

two of this series, *Great Mazinger,* has been noted as a piece which concerned itself

with Japan's national identity crisis, having to deal with the American occupation force

which was no longer concerned with Japan's reconstruction as it had directed its

attention toward other foes and projects around the world. This work attempted to solve

this national identity crisis and discern a method for Japan to stand back up on its

own.[xxvii]

This series, which was created over several years, not only fell into the postwar

period of literature, but also managed to join postmodern works in its undertakings.

During the early 1970's, when this series was televised, Japan was in the midst of a

cultural and industrial reformation period. During this period, Japan borrowed

technology from other nations, improved it, and built up a huge manufacturing industry

based on these industrial robots. There is a direct parallel here to the third work in the

Mazinsaga, UFO Robot Grendazier. In this work, the protagonist's *mecha* comes from

another world, but has been retrofitted, improved, and is then used to lead Japan to

freedom from the alien invaders all around it, leading to the ultimate establishment of Japanese superiority.[xxviii] The conclusion to the *Mazinsaga* thus very accurately depicts the transition of emotions from the postwar period during the 1950's-1960's, into the 1970's-1980's. This period was more concerned with a highly industrialized and economically advanced Japan, than the previous generation, which had put the majority of its focus on dealing with postwar emotions, especially those directed at the atomic bombings.

One other, very important shift in *mecha* animé since the 1970's has been the rise of *Gundam*. This series and the *mecha* named for the series, are often synonymous with g*iant robots* and used to describe *mecha* within other series. The series spans over thirty years and has had numerous evolutions since it debuted for the first time in 1979.[xxix] The *Gundam* series has had another very important effect on the *mecha* genre as a whole; it is often considered to be directly responsible for the rise and popularity of the *Real Robot* genre over the 1980's and into the present.

4.2 *Mecha* and Adolescent Development

The *Mecha* genre is renowned for its larger than life battles as well as its huge and memorable giant robots, but one of the other archetypal constructs within the *mecha* genre is the adolescent hero. In virtually all *real robot* and *super robot* animé, it is an adolescent character, whether that is in the literal sense of age adolescence or in the metaphorical adolescence of maturity, which is the center of the narrative and the impetus for developments in the storyline. The overwhelming majority of *mecha* animé operate in this mode. In Frenchy Lunning's essay, "Between the Child and the Mecha",[xxx] Lunning observes a form of dualism at the heart of *Mecha* animé; the first

portion of this dualism is that of the *mecha* or battle suit itself. These are highly developed technological masterpieces that allow the pilot to achieve the unthinkable. The second part of this dualism is that of the pilot:

> "A child, or at least an adolescent person...always an immature identity, this pilot holds the other half of the dual *mecha* identity."[xxxi]

Although Lunning describes this genre in terms of sexual development in the early stages, dealing with such issues as oedipal complexes etc, developing youth are at the heart of *mecha* animé.

Many psychologists have postulated theories for the development of adolescents. Among these are Havighurst, Levinson, and Erikson.[xxxii] Each of these men developed his own idea of how humans develop and how a child establishes his or her own identity; factors which were highly important to the development of an adolescent into an adult include: work, relationships, intimacy, exploration and commitment to goals. Many works within the *mecha* genre seek to interact with these developmental benchmarks within the narratives of their work and add more benchmarks of identity development as well.

One other well-known aspect of the *mecha* genre is the orphan complex. This concept is widespread and understood as a classic stereotype of adolescent characters within *mecha* animé. In virtually all series which operate in this mode, the protagonist is almost definitely without parents, having at the most a single parent (and usually only if he/she wants to kill that said parent). This orphan complex plays an important role in stimulating the growth of the protagonist and fueling their motives towards and through the *mecha* they wield. Their battle suit becomes the replacement for the parent they are

missing and helps them to achieve righteous vengeance against whoever caused the death of their parents in the first place.

In *Eureka Seven*, one of the three works which will be discussed at length here, Renton Thurston seeks to escape his deceased father's shadow by joining a nomadic revolutionary group which rides the currents of life on giant aerial *mecha* surf-boards. He is forced to create an individual identity within this group and figure out how he fits into the grand scheme outside of his family; he falls in love and figures out who he really is in relation to the individual he cares about.

In *Code Geass*, we see Lelouch, a high school student attempting to cope with a host of relationship problems as he tries to discover his real feelings for the people in his life. He battles against his father, the individual who destroyed everything with which he held dear; he seeks divine retribution for the murder of his mother at his father's hands. He dons the identity of a masked rebel leader trying to guide the people of Japan to freedom from the Tyranny of the Britanian Empire.

In *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, Simon the Digger must establish his own identity after the loss of the individual in his life from which he drew all the meaning of his existence. He must create and realize his place in the world, first as the head of a group of humans trying to overthrow the status quo created by the beast men that have driven his people underground, then later, as the ruler of the earth, as he must assert what it means to be the leader, and more importantly, what it means to be a man.

4.3 Regarding Posthumanity and the Philosophical Interpretation of Identity

It is important to note, though it goes beyond the scope of this initial research, that identity has long been analyzed by people in fields other than psychology and that

some animé have tried to tackle these identity questions from an entirely different perspective. Philosophy has been the forum which typically discusses identity and what identity consists of. Many animé are famous for tackling this important philosophical question. In John Perry's, "A Dialogue on Personal Identity and Immortality,"[xxxiii] various questions regarding how we define ourselves are presented. This essay brings up questions regarding the unique quality of identity and its link to memory; i.e. how do our experiences and our memory of those experiences, create and shape our identity in time. This piece also examines the possible threats to the integrity of our identity. If we are cloned, or, our brain is cloned, how can I determine who is me? Questions like these are posed within a hypothetical scientific framework where brain transfusions and the like are possible. This is particularly relevant when we look at how technology has directly impacted the way we think about personal identity and maintaining identity integrity.

In an article written by Federica Lucivero and Guglielmo Tamburrini, the issue of cybernetics is brought into reality. This article, written in 2007, discusses real applications of brain-machine interfaces (BMIs) and how these biocomputers are being used to relate the functions of the mind; however, the main focus of the article is something different. This article's title is: "Ethical Monitoring of Brain-Machine Interfaces, a Note On Personal Identity and Autonomy." The true meat of this article regards the way science has started to interfere with how we think of ourselves and our own personal identity.[xxxiv] *Ghost in the Shell* is possibly the most contemplative piece of cyber-philosophy in animé. This work tackles numerous topics in posthumanism and the issue of maintaining identity integrity in a rapidly changing technological world,

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where the body is growing increasingly mechanical, is one of the central modes of this narrative. This piece will be examined periodically throughout the work, but the scope of philosophical discussion will be limited.

PART II – ANALYSIS

5. *Eureka Seven* – Surfing Mecha Counterculture

Eureka Seven opens with surprise and bewilderment as we are thrust into a story with all too familiar themes and archetypes, but set in a world of *mecha* and intrigue. In the first scene of the series, we meet Holland as he pilots his LFO[1] through the clouds in pursuit of an epic wave inside a *mecha* which is designed to surf the skies. We are then introduced to Renton Thurston, a young 14-year-old boy who despises his boring and horrid existence in a town

The Nirvash Type-0 – The central *mecha* within the narrative of *Eureka Seven*.

where the waves are sub-par. Renton is an amateur air-surfer or, as they are referred to in the narrative, ref-boarder. He rides a normal board and possesses no giant *mecha* nor does he see himself with a future. Renton looks up to Holland as a famous ref-boarder and wants to be just like him. Renton is seen attempting the same moves on his board that the legendary Holland, who appears on the cover of ref-boarding enthusiast magazines, was able to pull off at Renton's age.

This animé is heavily influenced by surfer culture. Not only do the plot and the narrative center on a band of counterculture revolutionaries, but several direct intertextual allusions are made to American surf films throughout. One of the biggest of these allusions is to the surfer film *Gidget* (1959).[xxxv] Two of the characters in *Eureka Seven*, Gidget and Moondoggie, are named for this movie, which was one of the most important films which influenced the culture of surfing.[xxxvi] Several important facets of

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[1] No meaning for this abbreviation is ever provided. The same goes for KLF

surfing culture are linked to the mecha narrative, firstly, the important role that surfing had in relation to the family and finding one's own place outside of family responsibility, and, secondly, the way surfer culture promotes acceptance and the rejection of boundaries towards achieving personal happiness.

5.1 Surfing *Mecha* and Family

The story of *Eureka Seven* begins as we observe Renton trying to define himself in terms of another, a non-family member role model. He idolizes and respects the man who he believes to be the ultimate realization of his dream, a fate away from the "family business" that his grandfather runs. Renton is essentially an orphan and has no desire to continue in his grandfather's footsteps. We learn that his father was a military leader, scientist, and war hero, who helped to protect and save the world before his ultimate disappearance (he is presumed dead throughout the bulk of the series). Renton's development can thus be seen prefaced by his struggle to define his identity in terms of the precedence established by his father and his grandfather and in terms of the work that he will do in his life. One of the major accomplishments of this father, the great Adroc Thurston, was the discovery of the Nirvash, a fantastic *mecha* with alien origins, which would become the basis for the creation of the first LFO's. Although Renton wishes to establish himself as an individual rather than as the son of a great war hero, he is drawn to the Nirvash and invariably ends up living his life, very much in his father's footsteps. The *mecha* in this case is used to facilitate acceptance with the father. Although Renton is initially very against his father and what he did during life, through piloting the Nirvash, he is able to reconcile this problem and embrace his new destiny, one that follows after his father and the achievements he accomplished during his life.

One of the main facets of surf culture as noted by John Flint, a professor of Asian Studies in Hawaii, is the impact of surfing on youth. He explains that surfing has often been shown to provide an alternate identity away from the family and provide youths, "an outlet for aggression and the development of physical proficiency within a competitive hierarchy with clearly identifiable cultural symbols and acceptable heroes."[xxxvii] This aspect of surfing can be easily identifiable in *Eureka Seven*, as we see Renton attempting to define himself, separate from his family, through ref-boarding and surfing the sky in the Nirvash. The *mecha* here plays a direct performative role in Renton's attempt to mix with this culture, while still being able to come to grips with his father's military side within the same narrative.

One of the more poignant plots within *Eureka Seven* comes towards the middle of the story. Renton, feeling extremely distraught over killing numerous people in battle, flees the company of the surfers he associates himself with and finds a place to live with Ray and Charles, a married couple who work for the government as freelancers. Renton feels accepted and loved through his relationship with the two of them, but he is disturbed when he learns that they are in fact on a mission to hunt down and capture (or kill) the woman Renton loves. He feels a severe sense of abandonment and betrayal upon learning this news and decides to return to his former place in order to protect this girl.

This sequence of events helps to reinforce the role that *mecha* have in regards to this idea of family. Although he feels incredibly loved when staying with Charles and Ray, he ultimately decides that the family he has with his surfing *mecha* friends is more

important than this newly formed family with Charles and Ray, and, in order to save the individual he cares about, he must return and pilot the Nirvash once again.

Family is perhaps the biggest area in which identity development can be seen across all three of the narratives analyzed here. In each case, very similar trends are depicted. In *Eureka Seven*, we see the protagonist as parentless, a common trend in almost all *mecha* animé which feature adolescent heroes. Some people go as far as to joke that if you want to have a young person as the hero of a *mecha* storyline, he or she can not have any parents, "if they did, what reason would they have to go out and become the savior of the world?" Although this rhetorical and silly question hyperbolizes what is actually happening within these pieces, and, to some extent generalizes all the narratives into a single type of storyline, the generalization is not that far off. What we see across all these pieces is the absence of the traditional family and the replacement of this family with a new "family" built through the relationship of an individual and his or her interest sharing compatriots.

The relationship between children and their blood related familial others is a very important thing to understand in order to better grasp how identity of a youth is developed through these different mecha series. In her book entitled, *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure and Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club*, Anne Allison describes the social framework for men and how they relate to their work and their families in the corporate environment of the mid 1990's, but still remains relevant today. In her examination, she noted that the traditional Japanese "salaryman" worked very long hours, which often spilled over, after work, into drinking and spending time with coworkers, sometimes in bars, but often at *Kyabakura*, or hostess clubs, where men

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can "mingle" with women who are paid to sit and talk with them.[xxxviii] This portrayal of the man as a figure, mostly absent throughout Japanese childhood is a very important. In the world of *mecha*, the military can often be equated with the workplace. In narratives such as *Eureka Seven*, we can see the government and military father as an allegorical representation of the *salaryman* father who devotes his life in service to the company. In this sense, we see Renton's father as the pinnacle of a good working man; he is almost totally absent in his son's life and has no role in his upbringing whatsoever, but because of the role he played in the military and as a war hero, he is idealized by Renton's family as well as many people he meets.

The mother-child relationship becomes reinforced as a result of the father being absent. However, the relationship between mother and children has also been shifting recently in the 21st century. In *Eureka Seven*, we know very little about Renton's mother, but his sister, a very mother-like figure in his life, is absent as she pursues her career, which ultimately leads to her being sucked into an alien world; although this is a highly fantastic portrayal of the "mother" figure as a career woman, it does effectively illustrate some of the fear arising with women joining the work force in Japan. Mary White explains in *Perfectly Japanese*, women in the late 1990's joined the workforce at a much higher rate than ever before. This shift has lead to a redefinition of the family across these new gender roles.[xxxix]

Eureka Seven makes very interesting commentary about these types of gender roles, slightly outside of the presence or interaction of *mecha*, though they may still play a part in representing this new shift. Beyond the interactions with Renton's ideal family, that of Ray and Charles, the way Renton is perceived over the course of the series has

very important links to his relationship with the working mother and father. We see him not only fall into his father's footsteps, to some degree, but we also see him take on motherly roles in his interactions with the orphans that his rebel group has taken care of; we also see him don an apron and a towel and do the dishes as well as prepare food for dinner, taking on many of the tasks usually delegated to women in the Japanese traditional household.

5.2 Surfing *Mecha* and Inter-Species Romance

Here we see Renton and Eureka as they surf together on a tandem ref board. This image is highly recognizable in surfer films and photography.

Although *Eureka Seven* features Renton trying to develop into an adult with respect to how he feels about his family and his work, the major push of the story is actually a romance of sorts. In the first episode, Renton declares that he is in love with Eureka, the adolescent female pilot of the Nirvash and one of the members of Gekko State, a rebellion army created with the goal of protecting Eureka and fighting against the government, while still having time to surf and experience life. Renton's struggle to achieve a loving relationship with Eureka, is complicated by the fact that she is not in fact human. She is something of an alien species. However the fact that she is not human poses no distaste to Renton. He gladly accepts her and loves her from the moment they meet.

Their bond is strengthened because of the role they play within the Gekko State. While in many *mecha* animé, there is a distinction between one-*mecha*-one-pilot, in *Eureka Seven*, the *mecha* often feature multiple pilots for the same unit, very similar to the way we see the F-14 Tomcat in the American film *Top Gun*. Renton and Eureka share the Nirvash and pilot it as a team.

While piloting the Nirvash together, Renton and Eureka share a bond. They have a common goal and the means to achieve that goal is found in the battle armor which they share. Inside this world of their own, they are capable of achieving acceptance of their romance and are free from judgment. The Nirvash becomes a vessel for their continued harmony. Ultimately, the Nirvash transports Renton and Eureka to a totally unfamiliar world where they can finally achieve perfect harmony and peace.

Within the narrative of *Eureka Seven*, the Nirvash plays a very important role in the relationship between Eureka and Renton. Eureka, as mentioned earlier, is not a human being; her innate, alien powers, allows her to communicate with the machine spirit of the Nirvash. This communicative power allows her to sense the *mecha*'s feelings, a reversal of roles from the traditional *mecha* animé, where the *mecha* usually senses the feelings of the pilot to move, fight, etc. *Eureka Seven* is possibly one of the best examples, presented here, where we see the elements of Shinto being fueled into the *mecha* narrative. There seems to be significant anthropomorphism at work throughout the piece, as feelings and human characteristics are attributed to the Nirvash. There is also significant emphasis put on the environment and living eco-friendly made throughout the work, something that coincides very nicely with a surfer-ethic.

Flint also notes that surfing has been known to help break down social barriers and help people accept differences among people. This concept really originated through the "surging safaris" of the 1970's when people would travel the world interacting with new cultures and peoples.[xl] This concept can definitely be seen playing

a role in the way Renton and Eureka establish and accept each other. The surfer mentality here allows Renton and Eureka to have a romance and ignore the obvious barriers to their relationship from not sharing a species. *Mecha* plays an important role here as well, without the *mecha* in *Eureka Seven*, there would be no sky surfing and nothing to enjoin Renton and Eureka together. They would have no standpoint from which to build their relationship.

5.3 Conclusion

Eureka Seven presents a very interesting juxtaposition of opposites: we see the anti-military, anti-government, counter culture movement of surfers being interfaced with that of a militant war story. Flint notes that surfing and counter culture go hand in hand. With the need for youths rebelling against society and rising up for themselves, this type of narrative should find a not-so-surprising place in *mecha* animé.

Through this *mecha* narrative we see Renton Thurston develop his own identity with respect to his family and in the absence of his mother and father, a family situation that is not too far off from what is seen throughout Japan today. White notes that nurture has always been very highly valued in Japanese society as opposed to contradictory viewpoints that emphasize nature as important in child development.[xli] With the absent mother and father, where does the youth turn to for the necessary nurturing environment to grow up? We see Renton establishing a new family with the people who form the Gekko State. He forms a new family relationship with these peers, but also, for nurturing, he turns to the *mecha* Nirvash. It helps him to grow as an individual and provides him both comfort and support. We also see complex issues

such as the identification of gender roles being played out through an exciting war story that forces the audience to also examine these complex issues in their own lives.

The series looks at relationships and how love crosses boundaries in a future filled with surfing robots. Here, like the matchmaker of the past, we see the Nirvash bringing him and Eureka together as he is identified as her partner. The Nirvash chooses him to be by her side and through this choice we see them coming together. This role, often relegated to that of the father in traditional Japanese society, where matches were chosen for children based on family and credentials, is taken from the father and given to the machine. This is a startling thing to think about when the audience turns from the screen and looks at modern society, where parents have been almost totally taken out of the match making process, but dating sites and matchmaking services created through computer programs are growing steadily more popular. Will a robot choose your next significant other? It is not too hard to imagine this already happening.

6. Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion – Identity in Crisis

The story of *Code Geass* revolves around two high school students Lelouch and Suzaku who strive to liberate Japan from its territorial status as a colony of the large Britanian Empire. Although the narrative revolves around the themes of national identity and personal identity crises, it tackles these complicated issues from the context of a posthuman future where *mecha* are used to help break down the barriers of human physical limitations; however, these machines also allow humans to reach a state of self-realization

Here we see Lelouch (left) and Suzaku (right) standing in front of their respective mecha.

through their self-empowerment at the helm of a giant robot.

Unlike the other animé which are analyzed within this research project, *Code Geass* has identity, not simply as an underlying subtext which is at work within the posthuman narrative, but rather chooses to engage with identity as the central theme of the piece. The series directly deals with the issue of identity through the work and addresses it as the core concept of the piece. Whereas some animé, such as *Eureka Seven* and *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, deal with identity in terms of how it relates to other concepts, such as relationships, love, or becoming a man, *Code Geass* breaks down the concept of identity as the lens by which all other things are analyzed. As identity plays such a huge role in the series, it is appropriate to break down the concept of identity and explain it from several different perspectives.

6.1 The Techno-Identity Crisis

Trying to determine whether or not technology is a good or a bad thing has been the work of science fiction writers and film artists throughout the history of global science fiction. It is in this category that we see animé tackling the concept from an extremely different side; rather than attempting to determine the innate wrongness of *mecha* i.e. analyzing whether it falls into the black or the white, *Code Geass* looks at animé from a different perspective.

One of the first crises of identity within *Code Geass* is the issue of *mecha* itself: are they good or are they evil? The very name given to the armored mobile robot suits within this series, "Nightmare Frames" or "Nightmares", suggests a highly negative perspective. We see the Nightmare Frames in battle at great length throughout the series as they create the action. The series begins with many negative images of Japanese soldiers and the Japanese army being slaughtered at the hands of the Britanian Nightmares, however even in the first episode we see the Japanese taking up the weapons of the enemy as they steal these *mecha* and attempt to use them against the Britanian armies.

Despite all these negative initial impressions, *Code Geass* evolves with regards to its technological identity. Once Japan begins to develop Nightmares of its own and radically modifies them to fit their own needs, it becomes clear that the story has begun to accept the existence of these machines. Just as the real Japan accepted manufacturing robots in the 1970's-1980's, the future Japan in *Code Geass* must accept that Nightmares will exist and that in order to keep up, they have to look to these machines in order to remain competitive.

Later in the series, the Nightmares are presented in a very interesting way through their participation in one of Japan's most notable cultural traditions, that of the *matsuri* or festival. Susan Napier, in her book, *Animé: from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*, notes the Festival mode as one of the three most important modes in animé, accompanied by the Apocalyptic and the Elegaic.[xlii] Although *Code Geass* has a much larger focus on both of the other two modes, it occasionally reaches into the world of the festival for moments of humor amongst the bitterness, rivalry, and war. The most important of these festival sequences occurs at the Britanian school attended by the main characters. During the *matsuri*, amongst the playful chaos, we are introduced to one of the oldest Nightmares which the Britanian Empire developed. This unit became an artifact within the school and is brought out in order to help create an enormous pizza for the festival. This episode is critical to the interpretation of posthumanism within the context of *Code Geass* as it not only openly accepts the use of robots, but embraces their use in areas other than that for which they were originally intended. It suggests that although the Nightmares have been produced with the goal of expanding human limitations in battle, they are not limited to these destructive purposes and can be used for other purposes as well. In addition, the debut of this Nightmare within the context of the school festival, a highly Japanese tradition, reinforces the assimilation of posthumanity into Japanese culture.

Sawa Kurotani, a professor of Sociology and Asian Studies at the University of Redlands, notes that the school system in Japan is very harsh and that pressure to succeed in schools is almost dogmatically enforced by the strict social constraints put on youth by parents and teachers; she notes that the "school festival is one of the rare

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occasions when students get to exercise a degree of autonomy." She goes on to elaborate that the incorporation of *mecha* into a setting such as this could hint at something contradictory to the argument made here because the use of *mecha* in the festival could be symbolic of a resistance to the established social structure. However, in fact, the argument made by Professor Kurotani in this instance actually helps to reiterate the point made here, which is supported by animé scholars such as Susan Napier. Napier suggests that the festival, or *matsuri*, is a place where Japanese individuals can be freed from the ordinary and can transcend the conformity put on them by their culture. By integrating *mecha* into *Code Geass* in this festival scene, we can therefore see the norm established by society for *mecha* being rebelled against; logically speaking, if technology and *mecha* had not been something ingrained and established in society, with its own set of normative values and accepted purposes, then there would be nothing to be rebelled against. In other words, by having *mecha* make an appearance at the school festival, the series is demonstrating that: 1) *Mecha* are an accepted part of society, 2) *Mecha* have a set of accepted roles and purposes which make up the normative concept of posthumanism within the narrative, i.e. the use of them in combat, and 3) rebellion against the conformist viewpoint of *mecha* towards some new identity and conceptualization of this construct is possible in a society which has achieved 1) and 2) above.

This section of *Code Geass* helps to interpret the message regarding the interpretation the role of posthumanism in the narrative. As both sides adopt the *mecha* and embrace them, we move beyond an initial fear and apprehension of their use as some morbid step toward mutual apocalypse. During the festival they actually have

moved beyond this question of whether or not *mecha*, and thus posthumanity, are a good or bad thing; they have instead accepted that *mecha* will be part of their society and instead of fighting the existence of the *mecha*, they attempt to incorporate the machine into everyday life, redefining how they live accordingly. This process of moving beyond the question of intrinsic good or evil within the machine is one of the things which separate Japanese animé, and their portrayal of posthumanity, from other cultures and their respective media traditions.

6.2 National Identity Crisis

This crisis of national identity is highly reflective of Japan's current state as they attempt to maintain their national heritage in spite of massive globalization. Japan's national religion, its picturesque landscapes, and even its cuisine have all come under attack in the latter half of the 20th century and this trend has continued into the 21st. The national religion, Shinto, has become decreasingly important in Japanese youth culture, the national government of Japan, in pursuit of expansion and growth has begun destroying the natural settings with concrete and new roads, and because of globalization of food and the advent of fast food chains such as McDonald's, many Japanese food traditions are disappearing or are losing importance to the country. Japan must deal with all of these things while still trying to maintain its place as the 2nd largest economy in the world.

Code Geass opens with a scene from the apparent past. Two young boys are playing in the wilderness. Images of Mount Fuji, Cicada, and a woman in Kimono are flashed across the screen. The story unfolds by recalling the memory of Japan's national past and what could be described as the beginning of the downfall of the

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Japanese national identity. After the fall of the Japanese government Japan is redubbed "Area 11", a territory of Britania.

The main protagonist force in *Code Geass* is a group of freedom fighters, who rage against the Britanian government to regain control of Japan and restore its national identity. The leader of this revolutionary group is Lelouch; the son of the Britanian emperor. Lelouch has been in hiding in Japan since the assassination of his mother, the Emperor's wife. Lelouch blames his father for his mother's death and has sworn revenge. In his attempt to exact his vengeance, he is leading the Japanese revolutionaries in their battle for freedom and independence under the alter-ego of "ZERO", a masked genius battle strategist. He is aided in his battle for retribution with supernatural powers, specifically, Lelouch possess supernatural mind-control abilities which allow him to order people to do as he pleases.

Lelouch is only one of the characters within the narrative who is faced with a crisis of national identity. Other characters, like Suzaku, the son of the former Japanese Prime Minister, who now fights for the Britanian Empire, from his own sense of moral right, must try to define who they are through their nation. Karen, another of the Japanese freedom fighters, is half Japanese and half Britanian. She struggles with her identity, hiding the sides of her history from those who cannot find out about her lineage. The struggle to find and identify one's national identity is even more difficult in this era. As borders are being broken down, and people are migrating and mixing, the lines of race and ethnicity are deteriorating. This process is one which is becoming more prominent in Japan in recent years. After having long been a nation cut off and separate from the rest of the world, Japan is finally opening up its border to immigration

and allowing people to change their nationality to Japanese. There are several ethnic groups in Japan which have never been able to assimilate into Japanese society. The CIA world fact book estimates at minimum that .5% of the Japan's population is Korean, .4% Chinese. Also, large numbers of Brazilian immigrants are coming to Japan in droves and staying there.[xliii] Although these figures are vastly understated, they still represent important bodies of people for a country, which, up until 60 years ago, was totally closed off to immigration by the rest of the world. This racial mixing is far more profound in areas such as the United States, but still remains an issue in Japan.

Defining what constitutes the "Japanese national identity" is something that has been at the core of Japanese society for many hundred years and has even been noted to have originated during the Tokugawa era.[xliv] This particular kind of nativist theory of establishing Japan's identity, or, a uniqueness attributed to Japan is called "*Nihonjinron*". This type of cultural theorization attempted to find Japan's niche, or area of expertise, mostly in order to establish superiority of Japan over other world powers. This type of process worked in many different ways and countless scholars from all kinds of different fields have attempted to establish that identity which not only accurately represents Japan, but also accredits Japan with dominance. One critic, David Slater, notes in the *Journal of Asian Studies* that:

> Nihonjinron-theories of distinctive Japanese national identity or cultural nationalism-have had an important place in Japanese studies since the Tokugawa period. Harumi Befu defines this literature by its purpose: "to demonstrate unique qualities of Japanese culture, Japanese society, and the Japanese people". The assumptions contained within these theories find their way into prominent works on Japanese kinship, ecology, linguistics, aesthetics, and politics, among others. They have been invoked and legitimated through state sponsorship during Meiji nationbuilding, World War II propaganda, and postwar industrial policy. These theories range from the scientific and scholarly to the popular and banal, with nationalist or xenophobic variants all along the gradient.[xlv]

The concept of *nihonjinron* can easily be seen working here in *Code Geass* as Area 11 struggles to regain national identity and overturn the world powers which fight against it, therefore establishing a Japanese identity once again. Ideas such as racial mixing and the unique power of Japan, a culture different from the rest of the world, are all represented within *Code Geass*, therefore involving *mecha* in the *nihonjinron* quest.

The idea of *nihonjinron* is closely tied into a form of superiority complex possessed by the Japanese which has been noted, by analysts, to have some ties back to Japan's origin mythology and their creation by divine beings, and also being descendents of divine beings themselves.[2][xlvi] This idea, although being very primitive, has had some historical precedents which have led to propagating this myth. One particular historical instance of this occurred during the Mongol invasions of Japan during the 12th century. These attacks were repelled by the Japanese mostly due to what has been described as "divine intervention"; in reality this was primarily a result of weather changes that caused the oceans to swell and swallow up the invading Mongol armies.[xlvii] These typhoons, which are seasonal in Japan, helped save the Japanese and it is from this instance that we see "divine wind" or "*kamikaze*" being derived.

There is a current debate waging whether or not this rise in ethnic others in Japan is contributing to the loss of nationality, as Japan's population becomes more "watered down" with foreigners, or whether in fact this process is actually increasing the nationalism of Japanese youth. With a rise in foreigners, re-visitation and strengthening of *nihonjinron* sentiments could become more prominent. Regardless, both sides of this argument make valid claims; however, regardless of the side of the argument an

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[2] Many theorists also note that this idea is fairly outdated, but nonetheless has probably had some influence, albeit small, on the way Japan has evolved over millennia.

individual may be on, the fact that there is a debate such as this strengthens the importance of being aware of national identity as a construct which must be discussed and interacted with.

One of the ways we see posthumanism at work is through the construction of Nightmare frames by the different forces within the narrative of *Code Geass*. Although Nightmare frames begin as the weapon of the enemy, being the invention of the Britanian Empire, they are adapted for use elsewhere. Japan's first specially engineered *mecha*, the Gurren Mark II[3], is delivered to the freedom fighters and is piloted by Karen. Through this *mecha*, we see national identity becoming more defined. Karen starts in the animé piloting weapons made by Britania, but when piloting a *mecha*, constructed by Japan, she is allowed to truly shine and she establishes herself as the elite guard of the rebellion forces. Once she begins piloting the Gurren Mark II, she is often seen screaming at foes "WE ARE JAPANESE!!" as she plows through them with her *mecha*.

This establishment of nationalistic sentiment comes on the other side as well. Suzaku, the Japanese turned Britanian solider, receive a Nightmare of his very own, a cutting edge piece of machinery known as the Lancelot. Suzaku uses this machine so deftly that he rises through the ranks of the Britanian army to become one of the King's personal knights. Suzaku operates under a sort of idealism; he wishes to save Japan and reestablish its national identity by becoming the greatest of the Britanian knights. If he can become the greatest warrior in the world, through piloting the Lancelot, he will be

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[3] Automobile enthusiasts might recall that the Toyota Mark II has been one of the popular car brands since the 1960's in Japan.

given his own territory of the empire, Japan, and will be able to free them from their status as simply an area of Britania.

In both of these cases, the Nightmares serve as a driving *mecha*nism for the characters to prove their worth as members of their respective foster nations. Although both Karen and Suzaku both began on the opposite sides, through the use of the *mecha*, which extends their innate desire to prove oneself and one's national loyalty, they gain the capability to achieve great feats. In addition, the Nightmare serves as a "reward" for those pilots who have proven their national loyalty to the nation and is a symbol of status. As Nightmares are equated with power, the need for power means the need for a Nightmare, and thus, the need to prove one's nationalistic loyalty.

Another important note regarding the Nightmares within *Code Geass* is very closely tied to the divine aspects of *nihonjinron* and the divine origins of the Japanese, as a method to establish superiority. As it is has already been stated within this thesis, the *mecha* genre has been influenced, to some degree by the Japanese national religion, Shinto, and some elements within *Code Geass* provide ironic interpretations of this divine ancestry myth. The *mecha*, which is originally piloted by Lelouch in the series, known as the Gawain, possesses many divine characteristics. It is shaped to look like the Egyptian god Anubis, and is much larger than the average *mecha*. In addition the *mecha* is found on *Kaminejima*, an island with very divine links, as we find out that the Emperor of Britannia is out to challenge the gods. In addition, the Gawain uses some components which have been designed from essentially divine blueprints; all of these factors combine to form a *mecha* with extremely godly characteristics.

Lelouch uses his Gawain in order to protect Japan from the invading hordes of Britannia, and, as a practically divine entity, wipes out the entire force single handedly. This sequence harkens back to the Mongol invasion of Japan during the 12th century when Japan was saved, as if by a "divine wind". With this thought process in mind, we can see somewhat the idea of Japanese superiority being touted here, but not without a sense of irony. Lelouch fights for the Japanese, but he is himself, a member of the Britanian royal family; also, this particular *mecha*, although being used for Japan, was originally designed by the Britanian forces and was stolen for use by the Japanese. In other words, although the series seems to recognize the idea of Japanese superiority and the link to the divine, it also discounts these theories by putting the divine power in the hands of an outsider.

6.3 Familial Identity Crisis

Identification with the family, especially one's parents, is one of the earliest stages of personal identity development. Sigmund Freud postulated the idea of the Oedipus complex: the desire for the son to kill his father and make love to his mother. This type of identity development is extremely important during childhood. As the child grows up, affiliation with one's parents is critical in shaping how they will grow into adulthood.[xlviii]

Code Geass strikes many very important chords within this category of identity development. The narrative borders on Greek tragedy. It is filled with family rivalry, intrigue, and murder. Lelouch has the most complicated family story, which is far too deep and twisting to delve into here, but it centers on the same types of themes seen in stories, such as that of Oedipus, including the ultimate demise of the protagonist.

Lelouch loves his mother and is distraught after her apparent death (we find out late in the story that she in fact lived). The mother-son relationship has been noted as one of the most important in Japanese culture and this is reflected prominently here as well as in many other works, such as *Akira,* and *Evangelion,* and on a side note, when discussing this latter work, Napier explains that the *mecha* can often serve as a pre-birth metaphorical mother for the pilot as they are encased and the *mecha* feels the pilot's needs and acts according to its will.[xlix] Lelouch desires nothing more than to hunt down and murder the one responsible; ultimately he accepts that his father was really at fault and therefore, Lelouch vows to murder him.

We learn that Suzaku was once the son of the leader of the Japanese military government prior to its downfall. We also learn the horrifying truth that Suzaku murdered his father in order to end the fighting that was tearing apart Japan. He stabbed him to death with a knife.

In her essay entitled, "The Japanese Family," Anne E. Imamura writes about how the Japanese family existed traditionally and how it has modernized. The Japanese family unit, in the past had always been a very structured affair that was close-knit and involved multiple families living under the same roof. This has shifted following WWII and the rebuilding of Japan. New houses and apartment styles and the growth of household income have led to a national goal of "one housing unit per family, and today the goal is approaching one room per person (that is, a four-person family living in a four-room housing unit)."[l] Japan has recently begun to face a huge generational problem in addition to the defamiliailization. The elderly are getting older and older and the youth population of Japan is dwindling. There are fewer and fewer young people

around to take care of the growing aged. Not only are there feweryouth than there should be, but because of the family breakdown, they do not want to take care of their elders either.

The breakdown of the family and the infighting in Code Geass among the members of the Britanian household seems to heavily mirror the fragmentation going on in households all over Japan. We see *mecha* facilitating this infighting through the battles of Lelouch against his siblings, all powerful warriors who fight on the front lines of battle. Particularly, the war between Lelouch and his sister is featured prominently throughout the narrative and these two often meet head to head on the battlefield. *Mecha* serve to facilitate this struggle and ultimately help Lelouch and other characters to facilitate closure with their family issues.

6.4 Sexual Identity Crisis

Code Geass also has a very sexual subtext; through the narrative various same-sex relationships are explored, one of the more complex being the relationship between Suzaku and Lelouch. It is never spelled out directly that these two characters have a sexual bond, but the topic of homosexuality is breached in other areas throughout the animé, namely the same-sex relationship between Lelouch's female classmate and her love for one of Britania's princesses.

Rather than going through all the evidence to support this interpretation of the narrative, the emphasis should be: why do we examine this crisis of sexual identity within the context of a posthumanity. Many other critics have addressed the subject of posthumanity at length, especially in this context.[li] One of the most famous pieces of posthuman animé, *Ghost in the Shell*, deals with the question of how we define

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humanity in a world where we have reached a level of posthumanity where very little of us is left that can actually be called human. This narrative follows the actions of Major Kusanagi, a cyborg police woman who has had virtually her entire body, save her brain, replaced by a machine. Through this body she is capable of extraordinary physical feats, but is constrained by the mechanical nature of her physical being.

Some people have analyzed this story with respect to how it treats reproduction in a posthuman world as seen through the images depicted in the final sequence, where Major Kusanagi, naked and dismembered fuses with another naked and dismembered female cyborg to create an entirely new and unique consciousness in a form of new birth. What some analysts have described as a story about how humanity will deal with reproduction when our own bodies have lost their humanity, this story can also be read as another personal identity struggle as Major Kusanagi attempts to deal with her own sexual identity and desire to reproduce without the male. It is through Kusanagi's posthumanity that she is able to deal with and solve this reproduction problem as she is seen giving birth with another woman to a new quasi-cybernetic life. In other words, posthumanism allows Kusanagi the experience of reproduction by going beyond the bounds of physical human limitations on mating and child birth.

In much the same way as *Ghost in the Shell* allows Major Kusanagi to reproduce with another woman, posthumanism in *Code Geass* provides a means for Suzaku and Lelouch to confront the adolescent insecurity that comes from their crises of sexual identity. Both Suzaku and Lelouch lack many of the constructs that would usually be in place that allow them to deal with the troubles of growing up and establishing a personal sexual identity. They both struggle with their national identity and lack any family

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support to turn to for help. They are left virtually alone to come to terms with this identity crisis and look to the Nightmares in order to overcome this identity crisis. Suzaku and Lelouch utilize their *mecha* shells to meet repeatedly on the battlefield. Their battle operates as a metaphorical struggle to come to grips with their feelings for each other, which they do finally realize in the last scenes of the animé. *Mecha* serves here as something that can be relied on to support oneself. When there is nobody else to turn to, Lelouch and Suzaku can turn to the *mecha* for aid in dealing with these problems of sexual identity.

6.5 Conclusion

Of the three pieces examined here, *Code Geass* portrays the most complex personification of identity formation and personal identity development. We see the characters develop with respect to family and sexual identity through their *mecha*. *Code Geass* shows that, although many animé tend to fit into a certain mold of preconceived ideas for characters and personalities, not all of them have to fit into the standards established by society. Just as we see the *mecha* being used in the school festival as a rebellion against society's norms and accepted uses for these war machines, this parallels the way *Code Geass* tries to break the bounds of what can be seen in *mecha* narratives and the type of characters that stand at the head of these narratives as protagonists. Through the homosocial lens we can see the relationship between Suzaku and Lelouch as one which breaks down the preconceived notions of *mecha* heroes and through this we see the genre grow a little bit more.

This series also goes far beyond examining simply the notion of personal identity and looks very hard at the issue of what defines Japan. The subject of the work is

almost totally tied to how Japan can be defined as a nation and looks at this question

from the standpoint of a *nihonjinron* theorist to some extent. What seems to arise as an

answer is that mecha are a dominant force from Japan; technological mastery and

robots are at the top of their industry in land of the rising sun; this could constitute the

unique area which Japan scholars have been searching for, for hundreds of years.

7. Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann – Manly Identity

Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann approaches the subject of *mecha* from a post-modernist and highly colorful, comedic journey of a young boy growing up and overthrowing the world (and universes) order.

In *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, we see *mecha* as a tool for recapturing the warrior identity, and forging anew the warrior spirit. The concept of samurai, Japanese traditional warriors, is brought up here within the context of *mecha*. Patrick Drazen notes that samurai are regularly depicted in anime, though often from idyllic and exaggerated ways, but often the samurai, as a construct within animé, serves to underline several important areas, such as masculinity, dedication, and pursuit of a certain ethic.[4] He also notes the underlying Confucian influence on animé in this type of narrative, mainly that with perseverance anyone can

Here we see the three main characters of Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann, Kamina (left), Simon (center) and Yoko (right). Here we see Simon uncharacteristically serious, with Kamina striking his manly cool pose. The united Gurren-Lagann stands in the background.

achieve anything.[lii] From the perspective presented in *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, the warrior spirit defines what it is to be a man. The narrative of the series centers on the character Simon as he grows up and tries to establish a very masculine identity. The emphasis of manliness in the series is synonymous with the fighting spirit which is

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[4] This is not to be confused with the idea of Bushido, a totally different and unrelated topic which has a very different subtext and origins

fueled into the *mecha* and used to fight at the front. Ironically, the only major female fighting figure in the series, Yoko, fights in the back, with a sniper rifle, choosing to fight in a non-manly way, as is brought up in the first episode. *Mecha* serve, in this series, as a tool to reclaim male superiority and heroic spirit, something that has been lost over the years, especially in today's society where very few battles are fought on the front lines with swords and where the vast majority of society lives in quasi-peace far from conflict and war where men can establish themselves as being truly manly.

Many fans of *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* claim this piece to be the pinnacle of manly animé. On this note, there is even a very well known and widespread joke about the piece, which was coined following the eighth episode of the series, and has to do with the animé and its ability to elicit certain feelings in the male viewers, feelings which manifest themselves through, "Manly Tears".[5][liii]

Although the term "manliness" is used almost jokingly throughout this section, masculinity is a very serious component of this piece and in this brand of animé in general, but study of conceptions of Japanese masculinity is an area often forgotten in contemporary society as the shifts happening elsewhere, often in areas such as women's studies, negate much of the pertinence of studying male roles. In his book, *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan*, James Roberson, explains that, "while

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[5] On a side note, fans of the animé also note the fact that it is probably the single most chauvinistic piece of Japanese animation ever created which still remains mainstream and followed by a huge audience. Male dominance in this series is ridiculously prolific. Female characters are almost totally unimportant unless they are being objectified or being used as a plot device to further male dominance. This can be seen through the character Yoko, who is depicted in an extremely sexualized way and only serves as a love interest for several of the main characters. She plays little role or importance on the battle-field and has little contribution to the overall storyline. The character Nia has very little power and is portrayed as a helpless Damsel needing to be rescued or protected. She becomes an object for Simon and tool to prove his own manliness. In her book, *From Impression to Anime*, Napier writes about how the idolization of the Japanese woman has become one of the forms of soft power wielded by the Japanese; this objectification comes through very clearly in *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, where the women are idolized and idealized, but are left very passive, without dominance, left to rely on their male counterparts for protection and actualization.

important empirical and theoretical contributions have been made during the past several decades, gender studies are largely equated with women's studies and that insufficient attention has been paid to men-as-men."[liv] The study of masculinity in Japan invariably must mention several important areas. First of importance is the historical role of the man as a warrior or *samurai*, which, until the *Meiji* revolution was very important in defining masculinity. This trend can be seen continuing through WWII where warriors still roamed the countryside, but were involved in battle against the United States and wielded guns, rather than the traditional samurai regalia. However, after the end of WWII and the military forces of Japan were disbanded, masculinity had to be redefined. Most people understand the stereotypical explanation for current models of masculinity in contemporary Japan, that of the "salaryman."[lv] Roberson notes that the way people view this issue, equating the salaryman and the samurai, is often very shallow and results in historical misrepresentation, although he does acquiesce that there is significant parallel between them; he essentially cautions against overuse of the stereotype.

In terms of defining Japanese masculinity based on the groundwork set by Roberson and Allison, defining what makes a man, from the perspective of the stereotypical salaryman samurai parallel is acceptable for these purposes. Because this study deals with popular media portrayals, perceptions and stereotypes more than it deals with actualities, understanding the basics for Japanese masculine ideals is sufficient for our purposes. In some ways, the very archaic envisioning of manliness in Japan deals with the salaryman and his importance as the head of the household and as the provider for the family. Becoming the head of the household and the provider for

others, especially at the head of the state, is envisioned as ideal for becoming a mature man. In addition, in Japan, as in many other areas, masculinity and the ideal for accepted manhood is defined by a man's ability to excel in several areas, mainly "power, authority, and possessions", especially viewing women as a "possession".[lvi]

All of these conceptions of masculinity are changing. Roberson points these out in his work, as do many other individuals in theirs. We see men taking more active roles in the family, with respect to their children, now that women are joining more in the workforce, but all of these conceptions of masculinity stray from the point when trying to decipher the narrative that is *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*. This animé can, in many ways, be viewed as a return to masculinity in the traditional, very stereotypical sense. It is a hegemonic romp through stereotypical ideals of manliness, operating perhaps, as a reactionary piece to all the shifting ideas of masculinity today.

7.1 The Manly Example

The plot centers around an adolescent boy named Simon, a digger, who is duty-bound to help his underground village expand its boundaries and continuously grow. His boyhood role model, having lost both his parents in an earthquake, is an older youth/young adult character named Kamina (probably around 18-22 years old), who Simon refers to as *aniki* (older brother). Kamina is the rebellious type and is hell-bent on penetrating through the ceiling of their village and reaching the open sky above; a place the villagers do not believe exists. *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* is best broken down into three parts; Part 1 of this series features Simon and how he develops relying on Kamina for support and using him as the end-all-be-all example of pure machismo.

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Simon wants to be just as manly as Kamina, but is constantly second-guessing himself and whether or not he can be just like him.

This relationship of young individual and role model is very reflective of Japanese culture. Hiroaki Hatayama explains that many parents in Japan are very strict and encourage their children to succeed; this parenting relationship can cause extreme stress on a youth and therefore teens often turn to older role models, rather than their harsh parents for strength and support. This idea of turning to a role model for support is carried out through the narratives of many mecha anime, *Eureka Seven* and *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* included. This cultural concept is also something which reaches out through the screen to the viewer; many fans of animé turn to the narratives as an escape from their lives and find role models in the characters they see there.[lvii]

After Simon and Kamina break into the world above, they meet various individuals from other tribes and other villages who fight with them against the beast-men, a race reminiscent of the people of the future populating the world of H.G. Well's *The Time Machine*, in a role reversal, where only the beast-men are allowed to roam the surface of the earth, while humanity has been forced underground. The weapon which Simon wields in the battle against the beast-men is a *mecha* referred to as Lagann; this *chibi-mecha*[6] possesses the ability to unite with other machines and gain control over them. Simon uses this battle suit in order to steal another giant robot from the beast-men. Using this united "Gurren-Lagann", Simon and Kamina unite and fight against the forces that oppress the humans on earth.

In the first eight episodes of the series, we see Simon and Kamina in their *mecha* fighting against the forces of evil. However, there is an imbalance in the relationship

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[6] The word *chibi* is used to refer to something which is exaggeratingly small and cute.

between these two individuals. Simon believes that he is worthless as a person and relies totally on Kamina for support and to get through troubling and difficult times. He often is paralyzed by fear and is unable to act in battle and does not understand how Kamina can so easily charge in and be manly. He lacks any identifiable masculinity and is presented as very childish in physique: he wears baggy clothes and a little jacket, with goggles on top of his head; in contrast, Kamina is shown to be the definition of manliness. He wears sunglasses, walks around shirtless with his muscles rippling, and caries a really big sword. Simon on the other hand only has a little tiny drill.

This is further reinforced through his *mecha*. Simon believes that he can never live up to his brother and his ability to fight with his battle suit; this internal perception of himself as being a smaller, less manly individual is further enforced externally as Simon pilots the smaller,
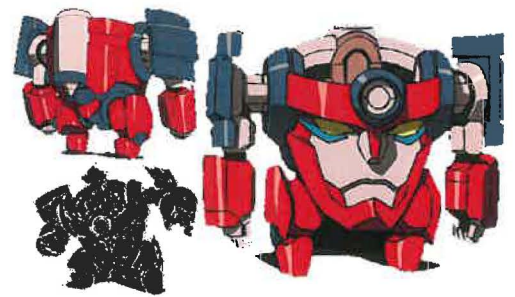
Simon's "chibi-mecha" Lagann. This small mecha reflects Simon's feelings about himself and his conception of his own manliness.

almost cute, *mecha* which is dwarfed in size, stature, and fighting capability to Kamina's. Simon totally lacks self confidence in the series and continuously looks to his brother for strength.

In Part 1, a phrase is introduced which evolves as the series goes on. Kamina uses this line when trying to snap Simon out of his cowardly funk and get his mind on the battle: "Simon!! Don't believe in yourself! Believe in me! Believe in me who believes in you!!" Kamina says this to him as he hits him in the face.

7.2 Manly Tears

As mentioned earlier, the series can be broken down into three parts. Part 1 of the series ends when Kamina, the primary driving force behind the plot dies; his passing has a huge impact on all of the characters and becomes the driving force behind the development of the characters in Part 2, which features Simon, Yoko, and their band of human rebels as they attempt to topple the government and ruler of the beast-men, suffering from the loss of the individual on whom everyone looked to for moral support.

The relationship between Simon and Kamina is magnified by Kamina's death. While Kamina is alive, Simon lives by constantly comparing himself to his partner. Simon is utterly helpless without his brother throughout the intro to the second part of the series. As this dependence/independence is tied to Simon and Kamina's union to create Gurren Lagann, he becomes useless to their rebel force and is unable to unite to form their most powerful fighting machine. This combined *mecha* has far more power than the two battle-suits separately and thus the overall fighting capability is diminished greatly as they have lost not only Kamina, but also Simon, who is drowning in depression.

With Kamina gone various individuals attempt to fill Kamina's place, but each has difficulty meshing with Simon who will not accept others to replace his dearest friend. His fears drive him to repel all those who would attempt to comfort or console him. During this period, Simon's grieving makes him unfit for battle. He is too dangerous to fight and becomes a liability for his team. During this period, his *mecha*, Lagann, finds a new home in a pile of trash. The *mecha* is discarded by Simon and the Gurren Brigade. This juxtaposition of Simon's depressed and bedraggled state with the disregard and

abandonment of Lagann creates a mirror where Lagann reflects the internal feelings of Simon; his feelings of abandonment and extremely low self worth are amplified by the state of Lagann. However, the *mecha* becomes a place where, again, Simon can help to conquer his fears and renew his strength. When the Gurren brigade is captured, it is Simon's determination that allows them all to escape; he tunnels a whole long enough for Lagann to come to his aid, and, at the helm of Lagann the entire rebel force escapes to repel and defeat their captors. Here, Lagann reflects Simon's will to overcome even the death of Kamina and ultimately come to a sense of self-realization. He allows another member of the Brigade to pilot Gurren; together they unite and lead the world on to glorious victory.

We see Simon's manliness beginning to come out near the end of Part 2. In Part 1, Simon as very childish in nature, but near the end of Part 2, he begins taking on many of Kamina's character aspects. We see him making the same faces of rage and shouting battle-cries at the top of his lungs. We also see him gaining musculature when he shouts "Do you know who I am? I am Simon!!!" He begins taking on much more manly characteristics as he eventually realizes that he can live up to Kamina and take his place as the leader of the Gurren Brigade.

During this period of the story, Simon falls in love with a new female character: Nia, the forsaken daughter of the spiral king, the leader of the beast men and the main antagonist throughout part 1 and 2 of the story. Nia helps Simon to find some measure of confidence and through this new relationship, we see Simon develop into a grown up. Nia, in some ways, becomes the replacement for Kamina. She is a new individual on

whom Simon can rely, not for support in battle, but for self-affirmation. She is critical to Simon's manly developments in Part 3 of the narrative.

7.3 I am a Man

In the third part of *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, the plot advances seven years. We see all the characters grown up and fully developed. Simon has established himself in the world and his peers have promoted him to the head of the world government. Each character has assumed his or her own role in making the world work; some of them have not really been able to fit into this new structural framework. Yoko, Kamina's love interest, and the main female protagonist has tried to hide her identity and begins work as a school teacher. The world has gone through profound change over these seven years. The surface world looks like something out of our future: flying cars, super-bio-computers, and interstellar travel. This scene is jarring to the audience as it confounds reason that humanity could develop from essentially cave-men to such an advanced species in a small time frame. This evolutionary technological speed reflects the way the world today has changed. We have accomplished huge leaps in technology over the last 100 years; *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* makes some commentary about that.

The plot of Part 3 centers on the possible extinction of humanity and shifts into the apocalyptic mode that we see so much in other animé within this genre. This apocalypse threatens to destroy the entirety of the human race. This action is further by the character Nia. After Simon proposes to her and she agrees to marry him, everything is thrown into chaos as Nia is "awakened" and we discover that she is actually a tool implemented by an alien race out to destroy mankind. The climax of the

series puts Simon and his Gurren brigade up against this seemingly endless, relentless alien power as his crew of *mecha* pilots blasts off across the galaxy to rescue Nia and preserve the human race.

We see how *mecha* is used to help shape the identity of individuals very clearly in the third act. Throughout the series, *mecha* are in many ways presented as a means to achieving the ultimate warrior spirit. The samurai ethic, one of the greatest Japanese traditions, is at home in the helm of the *mecha*. This is made brutally apparent in the final act when Simon is failing to see and play his part in the new world order. He does not feel at home behind a desk menially pushing paper and continuously desires to get back into his *mecha* and heroically save the day. Simon has established himself as a warrior and this identity is made possible through *Gurren Lagann*. He can only achieve realization of his self when he is doing battle wearing his battle suit.

In this climactic final part of the series, we see how Simon has grown up and turned into a manly warrior. He has assumed an aggressive role in his pursuit of a loving relationship with the character Nia, and even goes across the universe, spanning time and space in order to save and protect her. He has asserted himself, not just as living up to Kamina and his manliness, but surpassing him. In one particular scene, Simon stands next to the ghost of Kamina, and we see them in contrast. Simon has grown taller, more muscular, and his clothes are even more manly than Kamina's. The final incarnation of the ever-growing *Gurren Lagann*, is giant beyond human comprehension. The final battle of the series depicts Simon literally hurling galaxies at his enemy and channeling the entire fighting spirit of the human race as he attempts to save his beloved Nia and humanity from extinction. Simon's manliness is mirrored in

Gurren Lagann which shows that he has truly grown to be a greater man than anyone could have ever dreamed. The phrase which Kamina had used to roust Simon from his slumps is altered in this part; instead of believing in Kamina, the battle cry changes as Simon brings up an image of Kamina in his head: "Believe in yourself. Not you who believes in me. Not me, who believes in you. Believe in you, who believes in yourself!!!" Simon believes in himself and this self-actualization leads him to victory.

7.4 Conclusion

Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann is about one thing and one thing only, defining yourself as a man in the context of a rapidly changing world where technology is advancing at an exponentially evolving rate. Seen in contrast with other works, *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* might seem very shallow. *Code Geass*, in comparison, seems to look toward the future and present possibilities for alternative identities which are defined less by society and the norms put on one by society, and more by the individual and that individual's preferences for living. In that series, we saw that homosexuality was an issue which the mecha genre is capable of exploring; however, here, in *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, we see what is most accurately described as a masculine reaction towards this shift. The series shuns the effeminate male in trying to establish dominant heterosexual identity based on societies norms. This is even done quite literally throughout the series; one of the characters, Leron, is portrayed as a homosexual man, but not as a role model, rather as a comic relief character who, although being an accepted and valued member of the Gurren Brigade, is not someone any of the characters idealize or strives to be like.

Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann deals directly with the stereotyped and old-fashioned ideas of what it means to be a Japanese man, as though it were trying to salvage the mindset of the salaryman as a samurai in a world where this notion is disappearing and the salaryman is becoming more and more feminized. We see the characters dealing directly with the main ideals of manliness, that of power, authority and possession throughout the narrative in each of the parts.

In Part 1, we see Kamina as being deified by Simon as the ultimate form of masculinity. He has tremendous power as the pilot of their mecha combination; he possess fantastic authority, commanding respect from the Gurren brigade which he leads; and, we see him possessing a great deal, especially in terms of his triumphant victory in his relationship with Yoko, although he never gets to fully realize this relationship after his life is cut short.

In Part 2 of the series, we see Simon struggling to come find it in himself to fill the shoes left for him by his role model. The audience sees him questioning whether or not he has enough power in battle, and losing this struggle initially, as he is benched by the Gurren brigade. He is depicted as having very little authority, possessing no ability to command the brigade and lead them in Kamina's absence. Finally, he is totally void of possessions as initially he has no romantic connection and nothing to call his own. We see this all change over Part 2. We see him grow in confidence and regain some of the power he once had as he lets others pair with him to fight in battle. We see him gain authority and become the leader of the rebel group, leading them on to victory over every force that stands in their way. Lastly, we see him gradually gaining more and

more possessions, establishing a romantic relationship with a woman, and protecting her in Part 3, where all of his masculine characteristics are able to shine through.

Although *Gurren Lagann* may be shallow, it provides for a very interesting analysis of the men-as-men gender study from the reactionary point of view; it does all this through the *mecha* lens. We see mecha tied to power, authority, and possessions in every part of the series and linked directly to equations of the manliness of individual characters.

8. Posthumanism in Hollywood and the US

Narratives which revolve around robots and machines are obviously not relegated simply to animé and Japanese science fiction; this topic is prolific throughout American sci-fi and has been the focus of films in the United States for decades. The perspective on mechanization as seen through the films of Hollywood and the United States, however, take on a significantly different message than we see in animé. Many of these narratives fall into a single category: the "robot gone wild". Uncontrolled, the robot menace rises up to threaten and destroy humanity. In a review of the movie "Surrogates," a film that was released in 2009, Mal Vincent, had this to say:

> From the screenwriters of the "Terminator" movies, the new film [Surrogates], yet again, pictures a world in which humans interact only through machines. It's not a new idea, dating back to "Metropolis" through Hal, the computer gone haywire in "2001: A Space Odyssey," "Blade Runner," "Minority Report" and even "WALL-E." The message is the same: If don't keep machines in line, they'll take over and humans will just become robots.[viii]

In the film *Surrogates*, the world has been overpopulated by remotely controlled robot selves, in many ways, they are the US equivalent of *mecha*. Human beings have, for fear of disease and violence, locked themselves in their respective rooms and live their lives through machines. Where, in animé, we see the human being sitting inside and piloting the *mecha*, in *Surrogates* we see human beings lock inside their homes and inside their rooms, while the *mecha* is remotely controlled from a safe difference. These machines however, have not made things better for the world, but rather, quite to the contrary, the side effect of living lives through robots, is that humans have essentially lost all the distinguishing characteristics that make them human. The climax of the movie threatens to destroy all of humanity as the robot others are given a computer virus.

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This film presents a very strong anti-robot theme. It is a parable about how our humanity is deteriorating through mechanization and technology, but what is even more pronounced is the effect of identity loss through technology. Some of the most startling images in the film are those where we see the humans behind the machine. The film's opening sequences center around an FBI agent who is investigating the death of a human which was "plugged in" to their robot alter ego. The robot, which we see, is a beautiful and attractive young female blonde. However, upon entering the apartment of the person who piloted it, we discover that the actual person is a hugely overweight middle aged man. The message here is that technology allows us to hide who we are as well as deceive ourselves and others by creating a fake robotic self.

One of the other important comparisons which should be made between *Surrogates* and *Mecha* animé is the closeness of man/machine. In *Surrogates* there is no closeness or affiliation between man and his *mecha* partner. We see the robot others going about the world, getting destroyed and rebuilt with little concern by the pilot. Because the pilot is off in some distant location, there is no threat to the pilot; whatever happens to the *mecha* is independent of the human controlling it. When this rule of reality becomes threatened, society crumbles. In *mecha animé* however, this is clearly not the case. The human being is literally inside the battle suit. They are being amplified and extended, but also face some degree of risk; these individuals are inside the armored battle suit and are in danger. Despite being inside the *mecha* they are still experiencing the world first hand, up close and personal rather than from far away. Although in most animé, being in danger, does not translate to getting killed, as the *mecha* usually provides a fairly good protection from harm; this is not a steadfast rule of

how *mecha* work. Take for painful example *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, in which the main character dies prematurely and without being able to fulfill his dreams. In animé, there is a closeness that comes between man and machine; this closeness possess some risk, arguably no less than living life normally, but it comes with risk. In *Surrogates*, there is no closeness between man and machine and also no risk. When humanity finally is faced with having to be responsible for the *mecha* and prevent harm from coming to them, they ultimately reject the entire *mecha* phenomena as a horrific façade which destroys personality and humanity and choose to live a life without them.

As mentioned by Vincent in his review, *Surrogates* is by no means the first work to pursue this theme; there is a laundry list of Hollywood films which all explore this topic. This theme stems from a period of industrialization during the early 20th century, when mechanization was threatening to put an end to human labor in many industries. Henry S. Dennison wrote about mechanization and its possible side effects during the 1930's. He posed questions regarding the negative impact of mechanization on humanity from a standpoint of fear, but also from some sense of pragmatism.[lix] One of the central themes within his work was whether or not mechanization would cause widespread and lasting unemployment; this fear was one which was shared by many of the working class, blue collar citizens of not only the United States, but also all over the world. He believed that this might happen, but it was unlikely to be so profound as to cause a lasting problem for humanity.[lx]

Although analysts, and researchers, like Dennison believed that the problem of unemployment would probably not be the end of the world, since mechanization did have very large upsides, others were not as convinced and science fiction authors

played on, and revisited these fears again and again. Kurt Vonnegut, made most famous for his works *Cat's Cradle* and *Slaughterhouse-Five*, visited these fears in his piece entitled *Player Piano*. In this work, he outlines an American civilization where everything has been mechanized and robots control the entire society. In the opening of the book, he summarizes very well, the shape that society has moved to:

> "During the war, in hundreds of Iliums over America, managers and engineers learned to get along without their men and women, who went to fight. It was the miracle that won the war – production with almost no manpower."[xi]

In this fictional USA, machine powered efficiency has replaced human laborers. All those people, unqualified to enter universities and become either a manager or an engineer are left to do menial tasks, unfit for machines: things like building roads, cleaning streets, or serving booze. The life of the human, in Vonnegut's world is totally unfulfilling as mankind has lost all sense of purpose and direction, knowing that whatever skill a man might possess, a robot would be able to do it better.[7]

From the 1950's following Vonnegut's work, mechanization and industrialization exploded. There were huge advancements made in the field of robotics which facilitated the widespread use of their labor in factories, especially in the automotive industry. From this point on, robots in science fiction became extremely well known, mainstream, and recognizable.

One film, which changed the entire scope of science fiction, was the cinema epic, *Star Wars*. This film revolutionized cinema through special effects, and went on to spawn a science fiction legacy generating billions of dollars in revenue. There have been five sequels to the original film, television series, as well as hundreds of novels.

Ironically, the two characters that have the largest role in all six of the major *Star Wars* motion pictures are the two robots: C-3PO and R2-D2. These little machines serve, at most times, as comedic relief throughout the films. They make entertaining noises and are generally loveable characters.

One of the very interesting things about them is that these two make-believe characters have begun to resemble the way robotics is advancing in today's era of technological evolution. Robots very much like R2-D2 are being developed, or already exist, for use in the home.

In 1984, *Terminator* started the mainstream science fiction film trend of robots making war on humanity. This movie has had a colossal impact not only on science fiction films, but also on real research d up until now, the effect of which is far too great to completely detail here, but it is worth mentioning because today, researchers within the government and at major robotics think-tanks are seriously considering the implications of highly intelligent AI (artificial intelligence) and the possibilities of robots gaining enlightenment and deciding that they did not need humans around anymore. In an article in *Popular Mechanics*, Erik Sofge, points out that, "The Office of Naval Research, among others, has studied whether ethical guidelines will be needed for military robots, and in a 2008 preliminary report the authors tackle the bleakest possible endgame: "Terminator scenarios where machines turn against us lesser humans."[lxii] The conclusion he reaches in the piece essentially destroys this hypothesis, but he does bring up several other fears about robots and their effect on mankind. One of which has very interesting connotations: Will we like living with robots too much?[lxiii] In his article, Sofge writes about the robot "Nexi", a social robot, which is capable of having

a semi-intelligent conversation, and is programmed with human behavior code which allows it to appear very human; it moves its big eyes, and reacts with very human facial expressions during conversation. He notes that some individuals which have interacted with Nexi have even "planted kisses" on it, but none fear it as a robot menace.[lxiv] However, even in this case, researchers are studying robots from a sense of fear and distrust. They are questioning the impact that robots could have on society and how dangerous they could be to mankind. This standpoint seems to be coming across in American science fiction.

All of this is not to say that we, as Americans, fear robots completely. We have also begun using them in the home, much the same way the Japanese do. We buy robot toys, and we are rapidly developing robots for domestic purposes. However, the media image we see through Hollywood very irregularly represents robots as such. Probably one of the most well-known and loved robots in America media was Rosie from *The Jetsons*, the cartoon series which aired during the 1960's; her role as the family maid is not too far off from what we are seeing today. The more recent CGI feature film *WALL-E* puts the robot at the very center of the story, making it the main character. Wall-e is a machine built to compact trash and clean up the earth, which has become unfit for human life. The story is light hearted and he is extremely loveable as a character. However, even in *Wall-e*, where the audience is allowed to identify with an extremely "human-like" robot, there is very little interaction between him and real humans; in fact the story could almost exist without any humans necessary to drive the plot in any way. We see here a very different style of narrative than we see in Japanese animation, which not only puts robots at the center of the plot, but makes human and

robot interaction central to the narrative. In animé we see the actions of humanity

framed in a robotic context where the relationship between man and machine is

complicated and leads to very interesting places.

PART III – RESULTS

9. Posthumanity – Global Trends and Perspectives

By comparing trends in science fiction between the United States and in Japan we can see a very different type of picture being painted. Many people point to the difference in how the original work of Robot fiction, R.U.R. was accepted globally in order to explain the way Americans have adopted this viewpoint of robots destroying humanity and Japan has not. This work came out in the very early 20th century and was immensely popular across Europe and spread quickly to America. It came to Japan and was performed in 1924, but analysts note that the play had very little appeal and that the Japanese populace did not accept the idea that robots could threaten to destroy mankind. "In the Japanese mind, robots with humanoid forms embodying advanced technology were not, by themselves, all that interesting. What did interest Japanese was the relationship of robots and technology to humankind."[lxv] What this work did help along was Japanese interest in robots and the way they could serve mankind or interact with people. This work helped to facilitate the creation of both *Doraemon* and *Astroboy*, which have in turn evolved into *mecha*.[lxvi]

Throughout the works mentioned above, the issue of whether or not *mecha*, and posthumanity is a good thing is hardly even an issue. In *Eureka Seven* and *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, *mecha* are instantly accepted, or, are a pre-existing facet of civilization in which the characters and the plot operate.

In *Eureka Seven*, we see *mecha* from the start. They are viewed with no malice or hateful intent. Often times, we see characters portrayed as being evil, or governments being seen as tyrannical, but the *mecha* themselves are not the focus of

the negative feelings. In *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* after being initially horrified by the massive mechanical monstrosities which break through and cause huge damage to the home village of the main characters, all semblance of hate or fear is totally lost the instant the main characters get inside their *mecha* for the first time and battle off the beast men.

The situation in *Code Geass* takes on a slightly different twist. Although in the beginning of the series we are disgusted by the effect the Nightmare Frames have had on the Japanese nation, this all disappears the second Japan takes up these weapons to use against the enemy. Later on, we see *mecha* being adopted for domestic purposes to serve in fun activities; this shift in view-point seems to be the most authentic when it comes to how real people have viewed technology in the real world. People are always initially afraid of change and fear new trends, new ideas, and new ways of life. In the early 20th century United States, fear of technology and mechanization was a real problem; there has been significant writing on this topic as shown in the previous section. Although many people were afraid of robots replacing humans in the work place and destroying the bulk of human jobs, this was not the case; however, the reality of the situation did not change the fact that people were afraid. This fear can be seen through the works of authors like Vonnegut and his novel *Player Piano*.

Although the fear of being replaced in the workplace by a machine has long subsided, the United States seems to still operate from a standpoint of fear in its approach to dealing with technology and robotics. Hollywood has, for many, many years, portrayed robots and their rise as an end-game situation for the human race as

we become inferior. Pieces like *Terminator* have, perhaps, instilled in Americans a fear that will not easily go away. The topic of posthumanism and robotic society is constantly being brought up, even today, as we have seen in the 2009 film *Surrogates* which again presents a very negative and apocalyptic perspective on posthumanity. These are by no means the only current films which present similar views. *The Matrix* Trilogy, is perhaps this generation's most horrifying tale of man vs. machine; although it does end on an ambiguous note as humanity and the machine society accept each other and agree to a form of peace, although they do not join hands and sing in the end.

The difference between Hollywood films and Japanese animé, as evidenced above, is one of focus; as Americans, through our cinema, we tend to look at *mecha* in terms of mostly blacks, but sometimes whites i.e. from a very polarized view of robots from good and bad perspectives. Some examples of robots and *mecha* being put on a pedestal include the recent film *Iron Man* and its sequel, as well as "The Jetsons". Not only that, but the later *Terminator* films have displayed a more nuanced perspective on machines and how humans relate to them, with them finally being merged into a cyborg form with the final installment of the *Terminator* series, *Terminator 4: Salvation*. However, in Japan, a whole range of diversified perspectives on posthumanism have been achievable because animé, as a general rule, has stopped polarizing the issue and have instead began examining how these constructs can be incorporated into the way we live and the way we develop.

All this being said, however, Japan did not always operate from this perspective with regard to animé and its interaction with technology and *mecha*. Many earlier *mecha* works have also produced narratives which coincide with those presented in

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America in the past and today. Examples of this can be seen in works such as *Evangelion*, which approach technology and *mecha* for a totally destructive perspective. This piece represents *mecha* as extremely dangerous and ultimately leading to apocalypse of identity, not to mention humanity.

The trends that have been identified here can perhaps be visualized best by the below diagram:
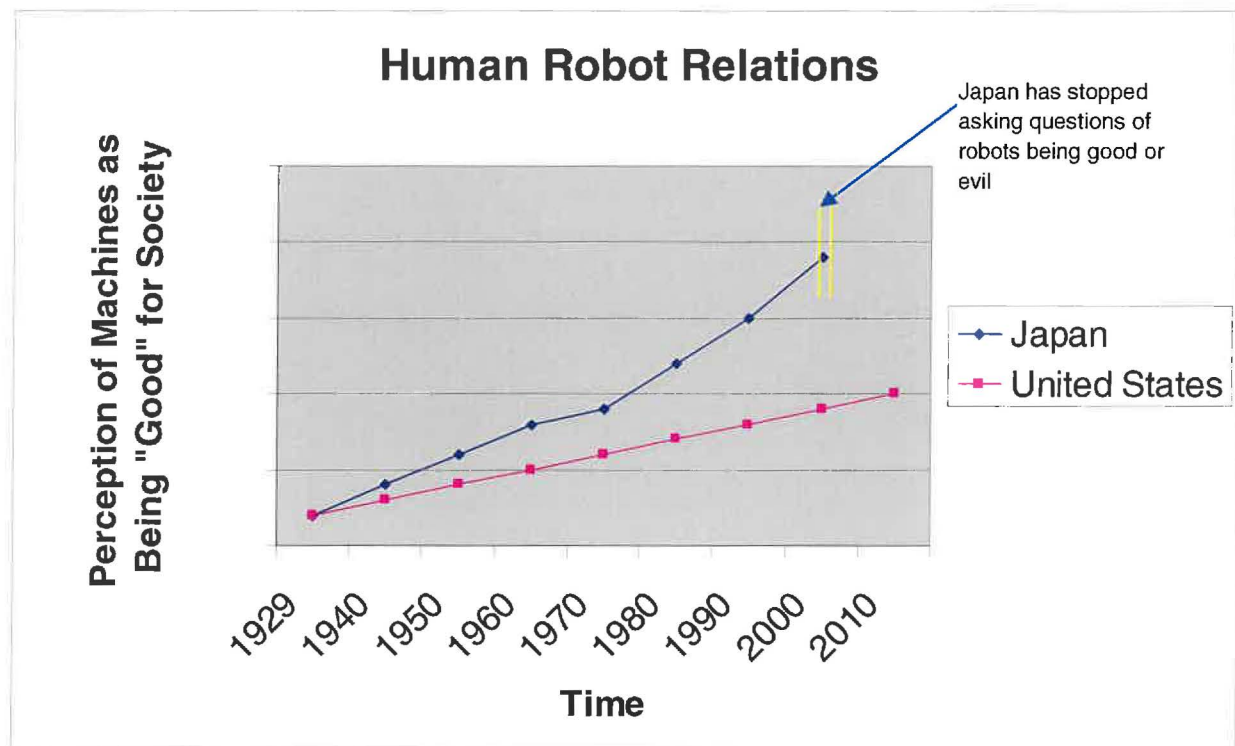
What this diagram attempts to depict is the shift which has been going on in the United States and Japan regarding how society views posthumanism. Although it can be easily expressed that America thinks robots are bad and Japan thinks they are good, the change in robot skepticism vs. acceptance is slightly more complicated. Despite making the generalization that in America, we tend to view machines as being highly apocalyptic and terrifying in nature, this tends to mask the more subtle shift from the past, which viewed robots as something to be feared towards the way they are viewed

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today. In both Japan and the US the situation is of course improving. As technology

evolves and mankind sees more and more use of robots on a day to day basis, human

robot relations are growing closer and closer together. This diagram is meant to show

that America has, for the last seventy years shown a slow steady progress towards

accepting robots and viewing them as being something good for society. Japan has

seen explosive growth in certain periods, especially during the 1970's when the *mecha*

genre was born, but this question of robots being something that is good or evil now no

longer seems to be even in the forefront of robot narrative questions (unless the

narrative in question actually tries to address and explain the shift which is occurring i.e.

Time of Eve). After the dawn of the new millennia, robots, machines, and technology in

generable seem to have been more or less written off in Japanese science fiction and

are no longer being questioned.

10. Conclusion

Although the posthuman condition is unlikely to advance as quickly as we see in animé, trends in current society are developing an increasing closeness between man and machine. Trends in manufacturing suggest that the previous generations of fully automated robots are being upgraded to more advanced machines, but these more evolved robots are also much more highly dependent on human involvement. Not only do we see this closeness manifesting in the manual labor side of human machine interaction, but robots are seeing more and more representation inside the home; their purposes are becoming more varied as technology evolves to suit more difficult and complex tasks.

In *Eureka Seven*, we see the posthuman *mecha* body as a tool for extending humanity, not only towards the goal of war, but also for recreation; the characters not only use their *mecha* to fight, but also use them to surf the skies and experience a more extreme side of life. These *mecha* also bring people together and serve a highly social purpose as seen through the dual pilot relationship of Eureka and Renton inside the Nirvash; the *mecha* is used to help establish identity with respect to relationships and interaction with others.

Through their posthuman *mecha* bodies, the characters of *Code Geass* are able to find support and come to grips with the crises of national, familial, and sexual identity which plague them. The image of the future presented in *Code Geass* in not entirely unrealistic from the perspective of technological advancement. Though we are not likely to see giant robots waging wars within the next twenty years, given the explosive and exponential growth of technology over the 20th century, it is not entirely unlikely that

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we could see robots like these by the 22nd. Given that we are using unsophisticated *mecha* on the battlefield today, in areas like the Middle East, the precedent for using robots to wage war has already been instilled in human kind. The *mecha* we see in animé are probably not too far off from where robotics engineers and researchers in the military would like to see things go.

Within *Code Geass* we see an issue arising which is very important to any study of identity from the national perspective with regard to Japan: the issue of *Nihonjinron*. The concept of trying to find a "unique" identity for the Japanese and having this identity be superior to other nations. This type of philosophy is highly nationalistic and ethnocentric in its attempts to further the Japanese and place them at the top of the world. *Code Geass* follows a narrative which relates directly to this topic. The *mecha* used by the Japanese end the story on top, as if to say that Japan has triumphed in this category; however, in reality, this is far from the case.

In *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, we see Simon becoming a man and asserting himself as such. We see male development in its most exaggerated and action oriented form. The animé allows the viewer to see the development of the main character very literally through the *mecha* he wields and we see his changes and development towards manliness through his *mecha* getting bigger and bigger and getting increasingly powerful.

In all of these pieces we see the concept of posthumanism at work and being symbolically linked to identity through *mecha*. Although we see many of societies norms being promoted through these narratives, such as the conception of masculinity as seen in the characters Kamina and Simon in *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*, we also

see the promotion of a more diverse identities at work. The animé medium can be very surprising in terms of the type of characters that exist and the type of roles they play; although not every film or series is going to approach subjects such as homosexual identity and same sex relationships with maturity, sometimes there are those pieces which hint at a broadening perspective towards the world and the people in it. Series such as *Code Geass* may help to showcase characters in very different ways than they would normally be seen in similar series of the same genre. In general, as many scholars in the animé field have pointed out before, audiences for animé vary around the world; within the medium, virtually any person can find a narrative or story which they can relate and be attracted to. This type of process necessitates in animé a need to keep an open mind about people and how people develop and relate to others. What this eventually leads to is the promotion of a diverse set of personalities, character types, and identities, more so than you might see elsewhere. Animé has long tackled complicated areas such as homosexuality and the *mecha* genre does not seem to be much different.

These pieces very clearly represent the fact that human-robot relationships are developing a much closer kinship than in the past. However, given that this thesis analyzes the shift from machines and mankind being antagonistic forces, to being on much more friendly terms, it seems to imply that there is something inherently good about this relationship being closer together. Despite this impression, this is not actually the case. Although *mecha* are being used within these pieces for what would seem to be productive means, including the establishment of identity which has been outlined at length here. Apart from the explanation of this shifting relationship, this thesis does not

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presume to analyze all of the possible repercussions of having humans and machines moving closer together. The shift in this relationship toward dependence on machines could very well be a destructive and bad thing; there has been a lot of research regarding this concept done in the states and this thesis is incapable of enveloping the full analysis of a topic such as this.

Given that this thesis does not examine the underlying quality of this situation, i.e. whether or not the way Japanese popular culture portrays robots in the media is a good thing or a bad thing, it should also be noted that this work has not made any attempt to describe what could be masked by this presentation, or, if there has been a concerted effort to promote robots in this way for a greater purpose. The way robots are depicted in animé suggests a closeness arising between man and machine, but could this all be the work of the government or a mass cohesive effort to promote animé and technology as part of the Japanese identity? In 2007, the Japanese government announced the second five year agenda which would promote Japanese culture around the world; within the proposal, animé had a very prominent place. This began Japan's marketing strategy of promoting its "cool" side through the use of this form of media.[lxvii] In addition, the Japanese government has long been a promoter of the domestic robotics industry and has supported it since its founding. They have long desired for Japan to be the leader in this industry. Taking note of these government sponsored trends, could the closeness between humans and machines in Japan be seen as a government sponsored agenda to promote Japanese strengths? Maybe. Is this acceptance of robots into society part of some type of postmodern high-tech *nihonjinron* movement where Japan has established its unique qualities in the high tech robotics industry and

animé and has sought to reinforce these superior qualities through the media? Probably not. However improbable, both these questions are very interesting and should be examined looking into the future.

Overall, animé provides a very useful way for us, as viewers, to interact with numerous issues in the real world. *Mecha* animé is no different. Because *mecha* animé has moved beyond questioning whether or not there is a devil in the machine, the medium is allowed to pursue a whole diverse array of questions and topics. *Mecha* and technology provide a very poignant lens through which to examine issues such as Identity, as seen through the works detailed within this research; however, identity is really only one of the many topics explored in *Mecha*. Going back to the argument of color and polarization, America still looks at technology from the black, being very bad, to the white, the very good, often coming to highly polarized conclusions, but sometimes setting in some gray area of ambivalence or ambiguity. However, Japan, and the animé medium have stopped looking at *mecha* and robots in terms of shades of gray, but rather have begun exploring all the different colorful possibilities for these constructs and the role they could potentially play in human life. Identity is just one of those colors, but the entire rest of the spectrum remains.

PART IV – SOURCES AND CITATIONS

11. Anime Filmography

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- *Code Geass: Lelouch of the Rebellion*. Goro Taniguchi. Sunrise. 50 Episodes.
  2006 http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=6704

- *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann*. Hiroyuki Imaishi. Gainax. 27 Episodes. 2007
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=6698

- *Tekkonkinkreet*. Michael Arias. Aniplex. 2006
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=6531

- *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Hideaki Anno. Gainax. 26 Episodes. 1995.
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=49

- *Ghost in the Shell*. Mamoru Oshii. Bandai Visual. 1995.
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=465

- *RahXephon*. Yutaka Izubuchi. BONES. 26 Episodes. 2002.
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=849

- *Astroboy*. Osamu Tezuka. Mushi Productions. 193 Episodes. 1963.
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=422

- *Time of Eve.* Yasuhiro Yoshiura. Directions, Inc. 6 Episodes. 2009/2010
  http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/anime.php?id=7998

12. Annotated Bibliography

- Allison, Anne. *Nightwork: Sexuality, Pleasure, and Masculinity in a Tokyo Hostess Club*. University of Chicago Press. Chicago, IL: 1994.

  Very helpful in understanding definitions of Japanese masculinity vis-à-vis the family.

- Asimov, Isaac. *I, Robot*. Bantam Dell. New York, NY: 1950.

  This piece was one of the most important science fictions works ever written and provides for an interesting look at early conceptions of robotics and posthumanity. Helpful in outlining the four rules of robotics.

- Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction*. McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, NY: 1993.

  Used to help better understand films and film art from a general purpose perspective; this piece helped in provide some background knowledge on how to analyze films, with respective to constructs such as narratives, styles, and motifs. It was used as a resource for analyzing the works in this thesis.

- Dennsion, Harry S. *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Supplement, Papers and Proceedings of the Forty-second Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (Mar., 1930), pp. 133-155.

  This historic scholarly article provided information regarding the attitudes of Americans to mechanization during the second industrial revolution of the 1930's.

- Drazen, Patrick. *Animé Explosions*. Stone Bridge Press. Berkeley, CA: 2003.

  This fairly basic work provides explanations of common animé themes and tropes and has a short section on Giant Robot animé. It also discusses, in some detail, the more famous works in Robot animé, namely *Evangelion*. Also, one particularly interesting chapter on Samurai helped to better understand *Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann* and the pursuit of manliness.

- Flint, John. "Popular Culture – Surfing". Macquari University. October 26th 1999. http://surflibrary.org/popularculture.html

  This essay was helpful in understanding surfer culture and connections made to surf culture throughout the piece *Eureka Seven*. It helped to decode some of *Eureka Seven's* mysterious allusions.

- Gusterson, Hugh. "Coming Soon to a Battlefield Near You." *American Scientist.* Research Triangle Park: Sep/Oct 2009. Vol. 97, Iss. 5; pg. 420, 3 pgs.

  This article helped to elaborate on current existing robots being used on the battlefield today.

- Imamura, Anne E. "The Japanese Family". *Video Letter from Japan II: A young Family. Asia Society:* 1990: 7-17. http://www.exeas.org/resources/pdf/japanese-family-imamura.pdf

  This piece provided sociological information regarding the structure of the Japanese family and the role the family plays in Japanese society today, vs. how it operated traditionally.

- Lafayette de Mente, Boye. "Feeling Superior and Inferior". Asian Business Codewords. 2003. http://www.apmforum.com/columns/boye58.htm

  This work was also useful in understanding Japanese social constructs especially concepts of masculinity.

- Mitsuo, Nakamura. *Contemporary Japanese Fiction.* Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai. San Francisco, CA: 1969.

  Very helpful in understanding the varied types of literature, created in Japan over the last 100 years. The book is slightly out-dated, but it presents interesting summary information about the post-war literary movement and the authors who participated in that movement. It was useful in understanding how mecha anime during its birth can be compared to post-war literature dealing with issues revolving around WWII.

- Napier, Susan J. *Animé: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle.* Palgrave Macmillan. New York, NY: 2005 [2001 1st edition].

  Susan Napier is the foremost author in the field of animé studies. She provides here, her take on numerous animé and the tropes she sees throughout them. Her analysis of *mecha* animé as well as themes in animé are extremely important for the analysis presented in this thesis.

- Napier, Susan J. *From Impression to Animé: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West.* Palgrave Macmillan. New York, NY: 2007

  This work focuses mainly on fans and fan culture. It provides a fascinating perspective on how the people that watch animé congregate and how they

engage with animé. It also was helpful in understanding the way the west views women through Japanese visual media.

- Natsu, Onoda. *God of Comics. Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga.* University Press of Mississippi. Jackson, MS: 2009.

  This piece was included as referential material mainly for studying *Astroboy* as I possess generally little knowledge about this piece which had such a huge impact on the entirety of Japanese television.

- Parrinder, Patrick. "Robots, Clones, and Clockwork Men: The Post-human perplex in early 20th century literature." *ISR. Interdisciplinary Science Reviews.* London: Mar 2009. Vol. 34, Iss. 1; pg. 56.

  This work helped to explain some of the origins of posthumanism in America, particularly with respect to R.U.R.

- Perry, John. "A Dialogue on Personal Identity." Hacket Publishing. 1978

  This philosophical text raises several identity questions due to the presence of technology and therefore provides some interesting commentary from the philosophical study of identity, in contrast to the majority of the work found here.

- Roberson, James E. and Nobue Suzuki. *Men and Masculinities in Contemporary Japan: Dislocating the Salaryman Doxa.* Routledge Curzon. New York, NY: 2003.

  Very useful book used to understand the Salaryman phenomena and the concepts of Japanese manliness.

- Slater, David. "Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of *Nihonjinron*" The Journal of Asian Studies. Ann Arbor: Feb 2003. Vol. 62, Iss. 1; Pg 276

  This work was critical to understanding the basics of *Nihonjinron.*

- Sofge, Erik "Can Robots Be Trusted?" *Popular Mechanics.* New York, NY: Feb 2010. Vol. 187, Iss. 2; pg. 54

  This scholarly article presented researchers perspectives on the future of robotics, as well as some information regarding the sociological consequences of reliance on robots and how they could become detrimental to society, as we begin to grow more and more attached to machines.

- Stefoff, Rebecca. *Robots*. Mashal Cavendish Benchmark. Tarrytown, NY: 2008.

  Used to find early historical information regarding Japanese automata.

- Vincent, Mal. "Might be best to pull the plug on 'Surrogates'". McClatchy - Tribune Business News. Washington: Sep 26, 2009.

  This review provided interesting analysis of American posthuman films especially *Terminator* and *Surrogates*.

- Vonnegut, Kurt. *Player Piano*. Dell Publishing. New York, NY: 1952.

  Kurt Vonnegut is one of America's most famous authors and in this pinnacle work he presents a dystopian society which is being torn apart by *mecha*nical efficiency. Included as a method of interacting with previous works in American pros science fiction.

- White, Mary. Perfectly Japanese. University of California Press. Los Angeles, CA: 2002.

  A critical work for understanding Japanese family structure.

- Adolescent Stages of Development. http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/teens_stages.shtml

  Helpful in outlining, very easily, the steps of growth for adolescents.

- "James Dobson Promotes Freud." http://www.psychoheresy-aware.org/dobson73.html

  This internet source helped to provide a little background information on Freud from a layman's perspective.

- "Japanese Government Promotes Anime and Manga." Anime News Network. February 13, 2007. http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2007-02-13/japanese-government-promote-anime-and-manga

  Especially interesting article useful in understanding the Japanese government's relationship to the animé industry.

Anthologies

- Bolton, Christoper, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi. *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Animé*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, MN: 2007.

  This collection of essays focuses on robotics and analysis of posthuman literature. It delves into technological tropes and provides interesting takes on various classic works.

    o Nakamura, Miri. "Horror and Machines in Prewar Japan."

      This section regarding, *Dogura Magura,* was essential to understanding this work as little has been written on it and there is no English translation.

- Brown, Steven T. Cinema Animé. Palgrave Macmillan. New York, NY: 2006.

  This collection of essay presented views on animé ranging in topic and was useful for constructing a well-rounded perspective on animé and the people who watch it. In the section which focuses on posthumanism, it presented several fantastic pieces which discuss robots, technology, and the media.

    o Orbaugh, Sharalyn. "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis".

      This piece was critical in defining posthumanity and its place in Japanese visual media.

    o Ruh, Brian. "The Robots from Takkun's Head: Cyborg Adolescence in FLCL."

      This piece helped to better explain posthumanism as well as the media role in forming technological identity.

- Craig, Timothy J. *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Popular Culture*. M.E. Sharpe, Inc., Armonk, NY: 2000.

  This collection of essay primarily focused on Japanese pop culture with some essay included on animé.

    o Shiraishi, Saya S. "Doraemon Goes Abroad."

      This essay provided one possible explanation for why Japan does not perceive robots as threatening and ideas for why they can interact with robots and machines so readily.

- Lunning, Frenchy. *Mechademia Volume 1: Emerging Worlds of Animé and Manga.* University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2006

  This anthology was primarily basic in nature and dealt with anime from a very general perspective. It looked at overreaching trends in anime and its growing global consumption and acceptance.

  - Allison, Anne. "The Japan Fad in Global youth Culture and Millennial Capitalism."

    This essay was particularly useful in understanding how animation from Japan has been adapted and brought to the United States where it is consumed en masse.

- Lunning, Frenchy. *Mechademia Volume 2: Networks of Desire.* University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2007

  This collection was mainly themed around how animé engages with romance and desire narratives even delving into the world of the pornographic.

  - Lunning, Frechy. "Between the Child and the Mecha."

    This essay helped to outline how adolescence and *mecha* were intertwined.

- Lunning, Frenchy. *Mechademia Volume 3: Limits of the Human.* University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2008

  This volume was extremely important in looking at mecha as this was the central theme of the work.

  - Tatsumi,Takayumi. "*Gundam* and the Future of Japanoid Art."

    This essay was critical in understanding the origins of mecha.

  - Interview with Crispin Freeman. Frenchy Lunning. "Giant Robots and Superheroes: Manifestations of Divine Power, East and West."

    This interview helped to further explain the origins of *mecha* and how religious traditions in the East and the West have impacted these two respective cultures and their interpretations of both *mecha* and superheroes.

  - Otsuka Eiji. "Disarming Atom: Tezuka Osamu's Manga at War and Peace."

This piece helped to better outline the works of Tezuka Osamu especially with regard to "Astroboy".

- o Yomota Inuhiko. "Stigmata in Tezuka Osamu's Works."

  As Above.

- Lunning, Frenchy. *Mechademia Volume 4: War/Time*. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2009

  - o Pellitteri, Marco. "Nippon ex Machina: Japanese Postwar Identity in Robot Anime and the Case of UFO *Robo Grendizer*."

    This essay provided an interesting look at the history of mecha in the postwar Japanese environment, and how posthuman anime deals with issues that were important during this post war period.

- West, Mark I. *The Japanification of Children's Popular Culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki*. Scarecrow Press. Lanham, Maryland: 2009.

  This work provided interesting takes on many Japanese visual works. It was a useful source for studying the impact that animé has had globally.

  - o Hatayama, Hiroaki. "The Cross Cultural Appeal of the Characters in Manga and Anime."

    This essay helped me outline how Japanese visual media is consumed and appreciated globally as well as how to understand role models from the sense of a viewer as well as a character within a narrative.

  - o Pike, Dale. "Godzilla, The Evolving Monster."

    This source provided Excellent Historical information regarding the origins of "Godzilla".

- Whittier Treat, John. *Contemporary Japan and Popular Culture*. University of Hawaii Press. Honolulu, HA: 1996.

  This anthology presented varied essay on popular culture in a diverse range, with one particular essay, by Susan Napier presenting interesting information on apocalypse and science fiction in Japan.

  - o Napier, Susan J.. "Panic Sites."

    This essay had some very interesting commentary on science fiction in general and also on how war and apocalypse are things that are

extremely poignant from a Japanese perspective when looking at present situations in the nation.

13. Image Citations

These images were accessed via Google images and the citations for them can be found below.

- Pg. 1 Cover Image from Robotech, the American anime adaptation from the 1980's of several different Japanese series - http://www.kianyang.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/02/robotech.jpg

- Pg. 33 Image of the Nirvash - http://www.bmecha.com/images/post/eureka_virtualon/nirvash_surf.jpg

- Pg. 38 Renton and Eureka on dual Ref-Board - http://4.bp.blogspot.com/_ykuENlq4WFI/RjZth0PsdPI/AAAAAAAAACw/Iu6abpq2A4U/s400/E7+Renton+Eureka+Sky+Surf.jpg

- Pg. 42 Lelouch vs. Suzaku - http://pseudosarcasm.files.wordpress.com/2007/08/largeanimepaperscans_code-geass_suemura152__thisres__136106.jpg

- Pg. 58 Movie Poster for Tengen Toppa Gurren Lagann - http://www.insidesocal.com/modernmyth/TengenToppaGurrenLagann.jpg

- Pg. 63 Image of Lagann, Simon's Mecha – http://www.gurren-lagann.net/mecha/images/lagann.gif

14. End Notes

[i] Susan J. Napier. *Animé: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*. Palgrave. New York, NY: 2000. Pg 8.

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[iv] Susan J Napier,. *Animé: From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*. Pg 237.

[v] Anne Allison. "The Japan Fad in Global Youth Culture and Millennial Capitalism." Mechademia Volume 1: Emerging Worlds of Anima and Manga. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2006. Pg 13.

[vi] Sharalyn Orbaugh. "Frankenstein and the Cyborg Metropolis". . *Cinema Animé*. Palgrave. New York, NY: 2006. Pg 81.

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[xv] Takayumi Tatsumi. "Gundam and the Future of Japanoid Art." *Mechademia Volume 3: Limits of the Human*. Minneapolis, MN: 2008. Pg 192.

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[xvii] Nakamura, Miri. "Horror and Machines in Prewar Japan." *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Animé*. University of Minnesota Press. Minneapolis, MN: 2007. Pg 5

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[xxi] Patrick Parrinder. "Robots, Clones, and Clockwork Men: The Post-human perplex in early 20th century literature." *ISR. Interdisciplinary Science Reviews*. London: Mar 2009. Vol. 34, Iss. 1; Pg 56.

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[xxiv] Pike, Dale. "Godzilla, The Evolving Monster." *The Japanification of Children's Popular Culture*. Pg 3.

[xxv] Mitsuo, Nakamura. *Contemporary Japanese Fiction*. Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai. San Francisco, CA: 1969. Pg 146.

[xxvi] Marco Pellitteri. "Nippon ex Machina: Japanese Postwar Identity in Robot Anime and the Case of UFO Robo Grendizer." *Mechademia Volume 4: War/Time*. University of Minnesota. Minneapolis, MN: 2009. Pg 275.

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[xxxii] Adolescent Stages of Development. http://www.childdevelopmentinfo.com/development/teens_stages.shtml

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[xxxix] Mary White. *Perfectly Japanese*. University of California Press. Los Angeles, CA: 2002. Pg 133.

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[xli] White., Pg 134

[xlii] Napier. *Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*. Pg 30.

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[xliv] David Slater. "Hegemony of Homogeneity: An Anthropological Analysis of "Nihonjinron" The Journal of Asian Studies. Ann Arbor: Feb 2003. Vol. 62, Iss. 1; Pg 276

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[li] Napier. Akira to Howl's Moving Castle. Pg 85-120.

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[liii] Napier, Susan J. *From Impression to Animé: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West*. Palgrave Macmillan. New York, NY: 2007. Pg 75.

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