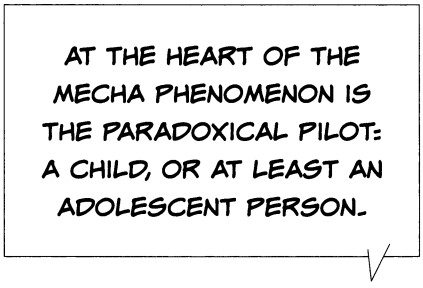
FRENCHY LUNNING

Between the Child and the Mecha

Prevalent in the narratives of anime and manga are the toylike tin men known as the "mobile suit" or "mecha," who are so compelling in their display of a mechanistic majesty and so intriguing in their representation of a complex web of desire. Mecha take many forms, but there are several constants that unite these forms through both their narratives and their visual composition. In narrative they are primarily armor for warring purposes, serving as highly technological protective suits for police or armies, as modes of transport and air travel, and, most significant, as containers for spiritual and physical transcendence for the pilots or operators who control them. As visual images, they are nearly always masculine in form: heavily decked out in idealized weaponry, with each giant muscle of the male form exaggerated and abstracted into sculptural plates of metal that are streamlined into a dynamic composition of hypostatized masculinity.

mechas are feats of HUMAN engineering.

Yet at the heart of the mecha phenomenon is the paradoxical pilot: a child, or at least an adolescent person. Sometimes female but always an immature identity, this pilot holds the other half of the dual mecha character. The pilot's gender tends to determine the nature of the narrative, in that "the female body is coded as a body-in-connection and the male body as a body-



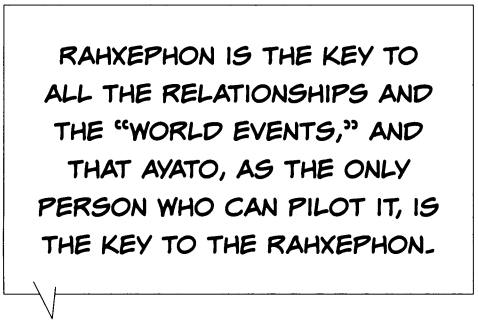
in-isolation."[1] These gendered and polarized notions of the body determine the goals of the narrative and proscribe the course of the journey for the pilots and the mecha that transports them. Whether male or female, adolescent or just immature, the pilot is generally posited as a human child: a person in the formative stage of development seeking a secured identity through a bodily identification via sexual and gender-specific tactics. These manga and anime stories produce a keen sense of poignancy and yearning in the reader/viewer, as a mature secured identity is a rare item in a contemporary postmodern culture that is obsessed and stuck in seemingly endless adolescent modes of desire.

Between the child inside and the mecha outside is a gap: a symbol of a yawning sense of lack suffused with a complex of narratives that lie between the child-pilot subject and his or her mecha-ideal image of power and agency. That gap is the space of lack and the consequent production of desire, the space of conflicting drives and conflating worlds, and the space in which the sets, lights, and costumes for the performance of the transformation into maturity are set for what Jacques Lacan describes as the full emergence into the symbolic realm.[2] These conditions within the space of the gap play perhaps the most decisive roles in supplying the narrative with its contents, for in that gap is scripted the journey that will counter the lack of the child with the image of its desire.

kamina going into the mecha is stepping, ultimate goal to become as large as the mecha?

RahXephon is a twenty-six-episode story of a young man's journey from childhood to his destiny through his personal coming-of-age event that is at the same time an event that transforms the world. The relationship between him and his mecha, the RahXephon, is a compelling example of how these sorts of narratives tend to speak to the issue of identity formation and the desire that fuels their performance. This anime can be read as an allegory of Lacan's landmark description of the three stages of subject development and as such suggests a potential key to the mecha anime and the fascination they hold. This essay charts the course of the anime against Lacan's description of the mirror stage, *fort-da,* and the oedipal complex to reveal their compelling coherence.[3]

The story of *RahXephon* is a dense interplay of interrelationships and an intertwining narrative of world histories and personal memories. It begins with the story of Kamina Ayato, a supposedly normal adolescent boy, who, after being brought to a temple at the end of a subway line in Tokyo after a train wreck, moves into a tale whose elements become clear only after the



viewer has experienced several more episodes. Ayato is an "Ollin": a godlike Mulian of transforming power once he comes into his full self. Yet in the beginning, he is an awkward and moody adolescent for whom the world is his own shallow and lonely existence. The backstory, in brief, is this: in 10,000 BC the empire of the Mu (also known as Atlantis) develops as an extremely advanced technological civilization. Out of this civilization comes the powerful and transforming RahXephon system, developed by Ernst Barbem, a Mulian scientist.[4] In experimenting with it, the world

> bifurcates in two, [as] humanity observes the "destruction" of the Continent of Mu. . . . In reality the continent and the Mu people . . . have been stranded in an alternate reality Earth. . . . Their new situation forces the inhabitants of Mu to resort to the construction of elaborate floating cities . . . the vast bulk of the civic infrastructure on both worlds has been destroyed. Collapse and regression into darker times begins on the human side of the dimensional divide.[5]

This situation has meant that the world has become "out of phase," or "out of time," and the world of the Mu and the world of earth, once one world, are now two. Time for the Mulian world has slowed way behind time in the outside world. A gap has appeared between the two worlds, symbolized by time, the sea, and the dome that surrounds Tokyo-Jupiter. This fact does not become clear until the end of the story, yet as the narrative unfolds, there is a sense that the gap between the worlds represents the gap that is the essential and symbolic landscape of mecha anime narratives.

The story's most intriguing and important aspect, however, is the strange destiny we understand involves Ayato and the RahXephon, the inner child and the outer armored warrior-suit. It becomes clear that the RahXephon is the key to all the relationships and the "world events," and that Ayato, as the only person who can pilot it, is the key to the RahXephon. Around this fact the two worlds collide in a swirling narrative of attack and counterattack that takes place through Ayato's narrative first inside Tokyo-Jupiter, then to the world outside, and continues back and forth as Ayato swivels from world to world in his attempt to understand his place. Deep into the story it becomes clear that the world is not only bifurcated into the Mulian dome of Tokyo-Jupiter and the world outside the dome, but for Ayato, it is also within the

familial gap between his mother, Maya, in Tokyo-Jupiter, and the world of his father, Watari Shirō/Professor Kamina, in the world outside the dome. Ayato's identity and "home" drifts in the gap between these worlds, under profound conditions of ambiguity and contestation as articulated by the demands of his parents and of the psyche.

THE MOTHER AND THE MIRROR

To understand the story's allegorical nature, its deep structure within the gap must be examined. According to Lacan, this gap appears at a specific moment in an individual's development: with the process of identification. After Ayato's experience in the subway wreck, he is pulled into what Lacan called the *mirror stage,* in which "the predominant sensation is one of fragmentation."[6] This stage explains the initial production of the subject in which key psychological structures are put in place. It begins in the infantile condition of a symbiotic relation with the mother's body that is an imagined state of bliss and plenitude, which is fragmented and brought into consciousness by the infant's recognition of itself as an image of self: that is, as if the infant has caught sight of its reflection in a mirror. Of course the image is not the self but the *image of self:* "This self, as the mirror situation suggests, is essentially narcissistic: we arrive at a sense of an 'I' by finding that 'I' reflected back to ourselves by some object or person in the world."[7] And we identify with that image. In the anime, it begins as Ayato is brought to a temple after the accident, lead by a vision of a girl in a yellow dress named Reika, whom he had loved when he was younger. In the immense temple gallery, standing at the edge of a broken shore, he finds a metaphoric reflection of his universe of dual worlds through the huge white egg, a symbol of Tokyo-Jupiter, which is lying across a pastel pool, which then cracks open to reveal the massive RahXephon mecha inside (Figure 1). Ayato instantly collapses into an unconscious fetal position, as the yellow-dress girl hails the mecha. In a later and transformative confrontation, Ayato, who is now emerging into his own self-consciousness, is pulled into the mecha. As he does so, he suddenly sees as the mecha sees: his mother, Maya, back on the shore, falls and cuts herself in front of the RahXephon as she tries to convince him to not to leave. He sees that her blood is blue: she is an "alien" who we understand are the invaders that have taken over and destroyed the rest of the world, all except Tokyo. That is, Ayato is positioned in the gallery to recognize the RahXephon as an ideal image of his self and thus identifies with it. It is itself a hatching

questions: is there significance with simon only finding a head?
Is there a birth to Lagann?
what can I say about how it operates? what's special about lagann is that it unlocks the potential of other gunmen.

infant, who has fragmented the egg in which it had lain and has hatched at the moment of Ayato's recognition. The mecha's birth acts as a mirror for the performance of Ayato's own emergence from his unconscious fetal and infantile state toward self-consciousness and self-awareness. He, too, will have to break out of the egg of Tokyo-Jupiter to fully emerge as an individual.

FIGURE 1. Ayato confronts the RahXephon.

FIGURE 2. "Who am I?"

The mother, whom he rejects while merging with the RahXephon, bleeds as the separation takes place, and her wound distinguishes her as "alien," as now a different self, as Ayato's new process of self-construction begins. The process of Ayato's desire to consolidate his identity as a plot structure is frequently enforced throughout the *RahXephon* anime by the image of Ayato looking at himself in the mirror and asking the question: "Who am I?" (Figure 2). It serves to continually lock in Ayato's search for identity through the reflection of images as the story's substantive thematic vehicle. Although Lacan explains this initial phase as beginning with an *infant* catching sight of, and the subsequent identification with, the image of his body separated from the body of the mother,[8] a further layer of remove from a strict interpretation of Lacan's theory is necessary and will clarify Ayato's narrative as one of an allegorical description of Lacan's entire narrative. Ayato is initially infantilized by his submissive obedience to his domineering mother and is only separated from his mother's power once he becomes one with the RahXephon. In that instant, as he gains knowledge that her blood is blue, he separates from his mother: not just from her body and the place of her body but in his abjection of the visual evidence of her *difference* from his body, represented by her Mulian (alien) heritage. He refuses the knowledge through repression and forces the RahXephon to eject him from inside the protective world of his mother, Tokyo-Jupiter, to outside the dome and the rest of the world. That is, in the Lacanian sense of the narrative, he has assumed a "specular image,"[9] that of the male ideal of the RahXephon. Though Lacan's description further stipulates that the child is still "sunk in his motor incapacity and nursling dependence,"[10] yet as an allegory of this theory, Ayato is represented as impotent, submissive in all his contacts, and he has difficulty speaking and asserting himself after he arrives on the island of Nirai Kanai, home of TERRA, an organization designed to protect Japan from the continual attacks from inside the dome of Tokyo-Jupiter.

RAHXEPHON AS THE IMAGO

A way to understand the transformation and the nature of this gap of desire is to understand the nature of the RahXephon as an *imago*. In Lacan's mirror-stage theory, he develops a notion of "lack," which further explains the process of identification and the gap of desire for the image of the body outside the self. Lacan addresses *that which the self lacks* rather than the Freudian notion of the "object of desire": "He argues that the human subject has a split

identity, and that we all have a lack. The . . . entity seeking representation is not full in itself; it is not 'pure' because it needs something else. A lack is a precondition for representing oneself."[11] So Lacan's "lack" originates in the illusion of a corporeal unity experienced in the first phase of the mirror stage. Once this illusion is broken and the identity's fragmented nature revealed, the subject experiences a *lack,* or a split in the self's sense of identity into "that which I am," the subject's conscious self, and "that which I lack," revealed through aspects of the self as image. How that lack is articulated becomes part of the structure of individual desire and a blueprint for a projection of the ideal, in this case the image of the RahXephon, a mature and powerful masculine agent. Surprisingly perhaps, this lack plays an essential and literal role in the narrative formula of Ayato, the child inside, and its relation to the mecha Rahxephon. The point of the narrative journey of the mecha and child is "to bring [the] human subject, . . . to recognize and name their desire—the relation of a being to lack."[12]

In its ancient usage, imago refers to a "representation," and further, "the final stage of an animal after the process of all its stages of metamorphosing . . . the perfect stage."[13] Primarily, Lacan links the initial notion of self with an image of the self/body. This linkage or *embodiment* through an image or "representation" in childhood sets up the process of identification for future encounters with cultural representations of "perfect stages" or ideal images for the identification of an ideal self. For a Japanese boy, stories and images of samurai warriors, whose primary goals were to protect the world against bandits and warring nobles, begin to form an ideal image of the protective masculine ideal that has always figured prominently in Japanese anime and manga through the similar representations of the mecha. The *RahXephon* narrative is overcoded with various profiles of *masculine protection* of the world against the alien and feminized Mu. Through the machinations of the older men of this story, the mecha and pilot become the samurai warriors for this world.

Yet the concept of imago has further meaning for the mecha formation. In a key paragraph, Lacan introduces several points that reference and intersect the process of identification in the apprehension of cultural images, and specifically for this narrative, a mecha image:

> Indeed, for the *imagos*—whose veiled faces it is our privilege to see in outline in our daily experience and in the penumbra of symbolic efficacy—the mirror-image would seem to be the threshold of the visible world, if we go by the mirror disposition that the *imago of one's own body* presents in hallucinations or dreams, whether it concerns its individual features, or even its

> infirmities, or its object-projections; or if we observe the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the *double,* in which psychical realities, however heterogeneous, are manifested.[14]

The essential statement would seem to be that "the imagos . . . are the threshold of the visible world, [in whatever form they] are manifested." This statement seems to define the mirror image of the self-as-ideal as the point of origin for the succeeding projections of the imago; that the root of an imago is found in that primary and essential designation of self found in the initial contact with body-as-image. In other words, mecha must in some way act as a *double:* to reflect an essence of the self/identity in its visual/textual manifestation. Otherwise, the narcissistic recognition is lost: the power of desire is too remote from the desire of the self and the child inside to recognize and identify it as an aspect of the self.[15]

THE POINT OF THE NARRATIVE JOURNEY OF THE MECHA AND CHILD IS "TO BRING [THE] HUMAN SUBJECT, . . . TO RECOGNIZE AND NAME THEIR DESIRE."

The "veiled face," or image of the mecha body, is an essential and formulaic part of the mecha construction. It would suggest a close affiliation between the construction of the mecha and the process for identification with the child inside for the viewer-subject. Its masked condition allows the "real" identity of the child inside to be supplied, through identification, by the viewer-subject. The viewer-subject steps into the gap to become the child underneath the armor and assumes the identity inferred by the conditions of desire. The mecha body represents the "perfect stage" attained through a psychic metamorphosis brought on by those same conditions. Thus Lacan's description and inclusion of the concept of the imago would seem to define the mecha in its construction of subjects.[16]

The notion of the "double" as a manifestation of the imago/mecha as a "threshold of the visible world" describes not only the physical manifestation of these psychical realities but the gap between the image and the self. In the vast proliferation of mecha narratives in manga and anime, there are many varied forms this doubled identity assumes, but the formula holds true to the structural notion of a double. The existence and subsequent performance of the double also secure the position of mecha narratives in the genre of fantasy and gothic narrative forms and provide insight into the *uncanny* mechanisms at work in mecha anime.[17]

Assuming the existence of a *lack* in the psyche, and assuming the consequent production of *desire,* what is the nature of that desire in the construction

of the mecha and the child inside? If the nature of lack is a sense of corporeal disunity (a split identity), then desire must in some way address the possible unification of the body with the psyche. Desire, then, is based in the subject's identification with a sense of a unified self. Cultural narratives respond to our recognition of the ultimate disunity of our body and self by propelling us toward stories in which the protagonist seeks unity through either a spiritual or a physical transcendence. This is a logical position as he seeks either the obliteration of his human condition or the amalgamation of higher abilities or conditions of humanity. In either form, the human condition in the achievement of these desires transcends to a position of an "other."[18]

FORT-DA

At this point, the world for Ayato becomes a dual presence: the world of the mother is located under the dome of Tokyo-Jupiter, and the world of the father outside the dome with TERRA. Tokyo-Jupiter is the place of his complacency and his submission, and the world of his infantilized childhood, and so although he begins to grow up in the world of the father, he is drawn back unconsciously to the world of the mother. It is a world in which the "truth" of Ayato's heritage and the reality of the absolute control of the Mu is utterly invisible to residents programmed not to see, yet profoundly evident to the outsider's eye. It is an interior world: claustrophobic and unchangingly normal, insular and "safe" from the larger and dangerous knowledge of the world outside. It is the world of the Mulians, a matriarchy with Ayato's mother, Maya, as the ruling entity, under whom all are controlled to the extent of controlling what it is possible to see and say. The weapons of the Mulians are the *Dolems* (Figure 3), which are usually in the form of the feminine human with open mouths from which they "sing" and activate their unique weapons of destructive resonance. This singing is tonal only, and as an allegorical symbol of Lacan's infantilized world of the imaginary, it is without words. The Dolem mouths are open like the mouths of baby chicks caught in the throes of the Freudian oral stage. The sting of these weapons is found in the lure of potential oneness with the maternal feminine, through a lullaby of longing for a return to the safety of the maternal world.

A scene shown frequently of Ayato sitting in the backseat while his mother drives the car (Figure 4), usually a symbol of power and agency for adolescent boys, becomes a metaphor for Ayato's lack of control, his complacent submission to the power of his mother, his inability to act as his

FIGURE 3. A Dolem from Tokyo-Jupiter.

own agent, and his psychological attachment to her body and identity. He is, when he is in Tokyo-Jupiter, nearly unconscious to all around him, and only awakens once he is called to do so by the memory of Reika Mishima, the girl in a yellow dress he paints obsessively (Figure 5), looking away toward the sea, the symbol of Ayato's condition of lack. Reika originates in the world of the mother, but in the outside world becomes the adult Haruka, a guide in the gap of desire from within the RahXephon. She is said to be the "soul" of the RahXephon, and as a complex of images and separate identities (Haruka: real-time/Reika: memory/Yellow Dress Girl: vision), she becomes a deconstructing sign of desire for Ayato.

Ayato, once he arrives in the world of his father, begins to travel back and forth between the two worlds. He experiences his own version of Freud's conception of *fort-da,* a concept Lacan brings into his own articulation of the stages of development of the subject. It is the second stage and represents the child's emergence into language, or the symbolic: the moment of communication and cultural acquisition.

> Freud interpreted [it] . . . as the infant's symbolic mastery of its mother's absence; but it can also be read as the first glimmerings of narrative. *Fort-da* is perhaps the shortest story we can imagine: an object is lost, then recovered . . . narrative as a source of consolation. . . . In Lacanian theory, it is an original lost object—the mother's body—which drives forward the narrative of our lives, impelling us to pursue substitutes for this lost paradise in the endless metonymic movement of desire.[19]

Thus begins Ayato's journey vacillating between the two worlds, living in the gaps between mother and father, between memory and reality, between his troubled interior and his doubled embodiment of child and RahXephon, and, finally, between his repressed desires and the fulfillment of them. As Lucie Armitt explains: "Forms [narratives] like fairytale or utopia contextualize narrative chronology in terms of what are effectively two competing spatial dimensions . . . predominately driven by an awareness of maturity (sexual or otherwise) as loss. . . . [it is] an ordered space, a horizon implying boundary and a perspective, a frontier."[20] Ayato's loss and repression has been the agent of the separation, and his consolidation of the two worlds will take many episodes to secure. As Lacan states:

> This is experienced as a temporal dialectic [Ayato's worlds are temporally misaligned by seven years] that decisively projects the formation of the individual in history. The *mirror stage* is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality [the RahXephon] . . . and lastly, to the assumption of the amour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development.[21]

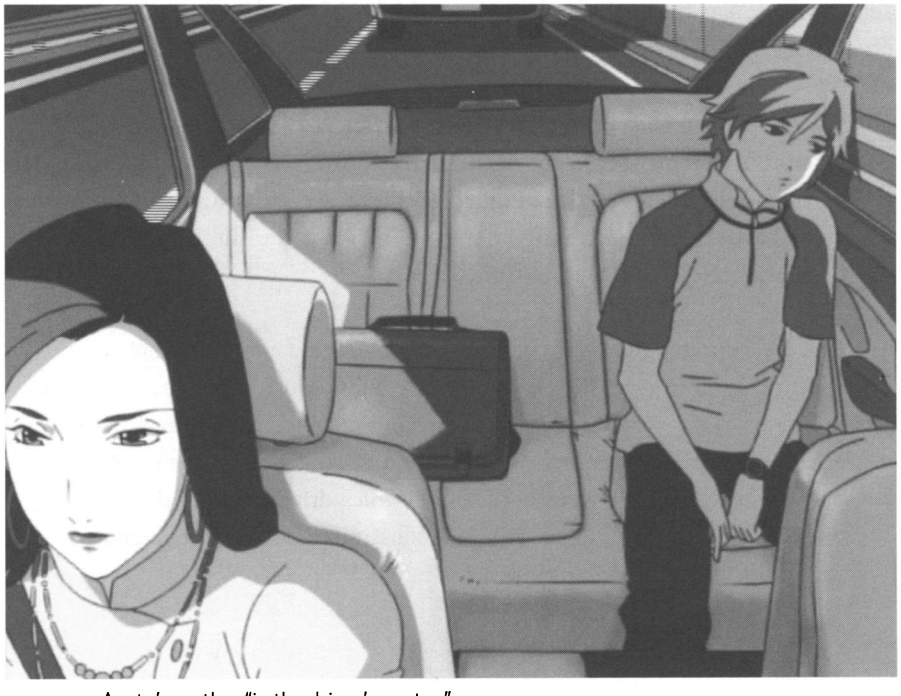


FIGURE 4. Ayato's mother "in the driver's seat . . ."

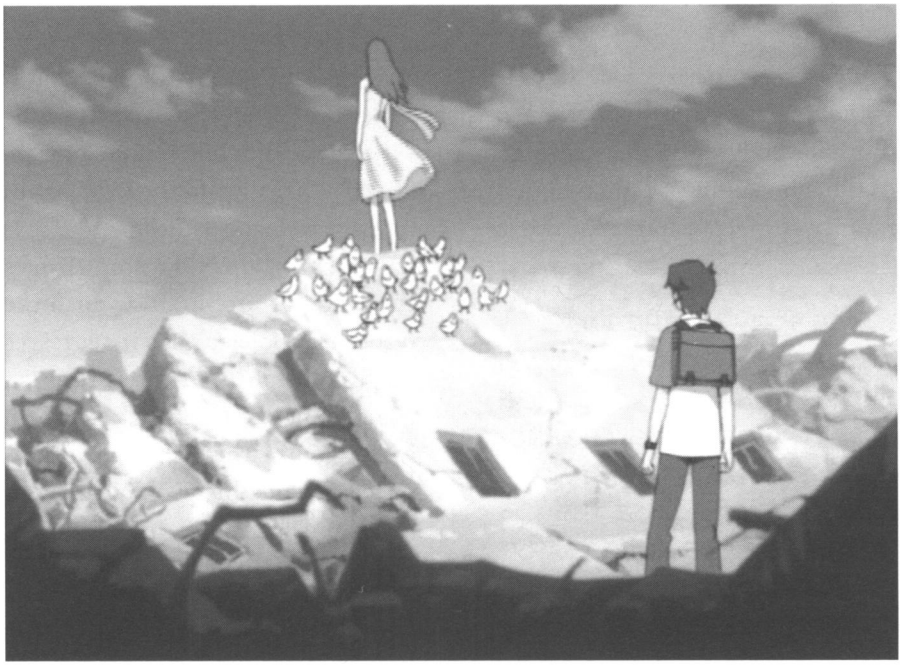


FIGURE 5. The girl in the yellow dress.

THE FATHER AND THE OEDIPAL COMPLEX

Ayato is introduced to the world of the father when he and Haruka, the mature manifestation of his lost love, land with the RahXephon on Nirai Kanai, an island near the dome and the home of the TERRA force, an army dedicated to protecting earth from the periodic attacks by the Dolems deployed from the Mu. From his first introduction on the island, Ayato is presented with a plethora of "father figures" who each in turn provide guidance and a certain model of masculinity. Watari Shirō, who is also Professor Kamina and Ayato's actual father, is the highest-ranking official of TERRA and the prototypical cold, *remote* father.

Kamina has no father figure.
What is the difference between a father and brother figure?

The world of the father, as seen through these men, is a hardened world of desperate battle and bitter memory. All of the "fathers" in this story are living in a past of pain: desperate for the redemption that Ayato's transformation will signal. They work as soldiers together, in a conspiracy of silent determination without concern for lives lost to protect the world from its reunification with the feminine "other," Tokyo-Jupiter. It is an overcoded masculine, instrumental, and militaristic world in which civilian citizens are only background aspects seen primarily as set dressing. All key characters are part of TERRA and work for what they understand as a strategy of protection.

Lacan refers to the world of the father as the law of the father, in that it is the imposition of the father's presence that breaks up the child from the mother's body through his signification of the law.[22] The child becomes aware of the taboo of incest and pulls away from the mother toward the larger community. This appearance of the law opens "up unconscious desire. . . . it is only when the child acknowledges the taboo or prohibition which the father symbolizes that it represses its guilty desire."[23] Ayato's feverish transference from father figure to father figure throughout the narrative extends his prolonged childhood and frustrates his desire for identification. His desire repressed, he begins hesitatingly to create relationships with the young women around him. His awakened sexual desire is key to Lacan's notion that it is only when the child accepts sexual and gender difference that the child can be considered properly socialized. With Ayato's remote father absent from his duties as the harbinger of the oedipal stage, it becomes clear that the entire anime is about the destructive deadliness of the child who does not grow up.

THE ALLEGORY OF THE ANIME *RAHXEPHON* IS A CAUTIONARY TALE, WHEREIN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE STEPS IN, IN THE FATHER'S ABSENCE, TO CREATE SUBSTITUTES AND SCENARIOS TO FORCE THE PRODUCTION OF THE NECESSARY TRANSFORMATION FROM CHILD TO MATURE SUBJECT.

The allegory of the anime *RahXephon* is a cautionary tale, wherein the community at large steps in, in the father's absence, to create substitutes and scenarios to force the production of the necessary transformation from child to mature subject. The worlds of the Mu and earth were bifurcated by the character of a single mother raising a male child. She both prevents and assists in the process of maturity: her own agenda requires the unification of the two worlds through which, in order to be put right, Ayato must truly merge with the RahXephon and "re-tune the world," that is, he must identify with the world of the father, conjoin with a female and thus free himself finally from an endless adolescence.

In the final scene of the anime after the climactic, long, and celestial battle between RahXephon, the Dolems, and Quon's RahXephon, the world of the anime is abruptly altered to a contemporary and mimetic reality. The long history of invasion and war and the labyrinthine layers of interrelationships are obliterated as if they had never existed. In this first "new world" scene, Ayato is not evident: he is only implied by the suggestion in a phone call between Haruka, now Ayato's wife, and Kisaragi Itsuki, Ayato's brother from

the world of the father, who had died in the spectacular final battle between the Mu and earth but who is now in fact still alive and on the other end of the phone call. Ayato is now, we understand from Haruka's comments, an ordinary academic, just getting his assistant professorship. In other words, instead of a transformation into a fantastical godlike being as the ending to a fairy tale, Ayato's transformation has brought normality to a world that was out of phase and out of time, and has secured the life of a normal but fully adult male for himself. His representation no longer requires a physical presence but can be inferred through his position as father to Kisaragi Quon (an alternate romanization of the name Kuon), the mysterious animus and overcoded feminine double to Ayato, who in this new world has become his own daughter. More remarkably, in this transformed world, the bizarre and fantasy world events of the past have been utterly obliterated from world history, and all knowledge of the events are relegated to the personal and psychical evolution of Ayato's maturity. Just as in the lives of all human beings, the raging wars of childhood are relegated to memory and dreams.

The resemblance of this anime to the classic and most-recognized mecha story, *Neon Genesis Evangelion,* as well as other such anime, is found not simply in the preponderance of the stunning and massive masculine icons but in the poignant plight of subjectivity of the childlike pilot. Though female pilots exist in these anime, as do Kisaragi Quon in *RahXephon* and Rei in *Neon Genesis Evangelion,* they tend to be anima formations of the young male protagonist. I would suggest, then, that mecha anime are generally narratives of male identity formation and subjectivity that are secured through the relationship and eventual unifying transcendence of the boy-child pilot with the mature image of masculine power and agency of the mecha. The story emerges not from their *difference* but from emergence of narrative incitement brought about in the deep gap between pilot and mecha, between lack and desire, between culturally constructed male images and the psychic male position. Mecha anime narratives are the flowers that bloom in the "no man's land" that exists within this gap. The conditions of these narratives describe the process of a distinctively male individuation through the displays of physical combat and a narrative of *protection* against invasion and war against an alien "other," either feminized as in the *RahXephon* or as mechanized technology as in *Evangelion.* The frequency of the mecha anime in this culture suggests a profound condensation of a need for this sort of masculine narrative. These stories have always dominated cultures and proscribed histories, and whether male or female, we as audiences are the beneficiaries of this form.

Notes

1. Anne Balsamo, *Technology of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1996), 144.

2. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: A Selection,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 65.

3. Lacan, *Ecrits.*

4. Philip R. Banks, *RahXephon Timeline,* khantazi.org/Rec/Anime/Rah7Speculation.html.

5. Ibid.

6. Lacan, quoted in Madan Sarup, *Identity, Culture, and the Postmodern World* (Atlanta: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 35.

7. Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 164.

8. Lacan, *Ecrits,* 1.

9. Ibid., 2.

10. Ibid.

11. Sarup, *Identity, Culture, and the Postmodern World,* 175.

12. Ibid., 38.

13. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "imago."

14. Lacan, *Ecrits,* 3.

15. Frenchy Lunning, "Comic Books: Sex and Death at the Edge of Modernity" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2000), 36–37.

16. Ibid., 37.

17. Ibid., 38.

18. Ibid.

19. Eagleton, *Literary Theory,* 185.

20. Lucie Armitt, *Theorising the Fantastic* (London: Arnold, 1996), 5.

21. Lacan, *Ecrits,* 4.

22. Ibid., 67.

23. Eagleton, *Literary Theory,* 165.