

THE CYBORG-OTHER:
JAPAN'S ANIMATED IMAGES OF SEX, GENDER, AND RACE

by

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Abstract

Using a semiotic reading of gender codes and Donna Haraway's cyborg theory, this paper is a study of the image of the cyborg through Japanese animated films and by extension a study of Japan through the cyborg. In such animated films as Ghost in the Shell (Oshii Mamoru, 1995), Battle Angel (Fukutomi Hiroshi, 1993), and Neon Genesis Evangelion (Anno Hideaki, 1996) the cyborg characters present new images of a hybrid cyborg-sexuality, cyborg-gender, and cyborg-race. The cyborg is a being in science fiction, as well as in cutting-edge science and technology, that is a combination of organic and cybernetic. The cyborg destroys the boundary between human and machine, by its very definition, and other boundaries by its use and interpretation. Japan has many images of the cyborg and metal-merged bodies in animated films and comic books. Japanese animated films and comic books show the cyborg's hybridity, as theorized by Haraway and others, in regards to sex, gender, and race. Using the cyborg image as a reflection of Japan, Japan shows hybridity in the same areas.

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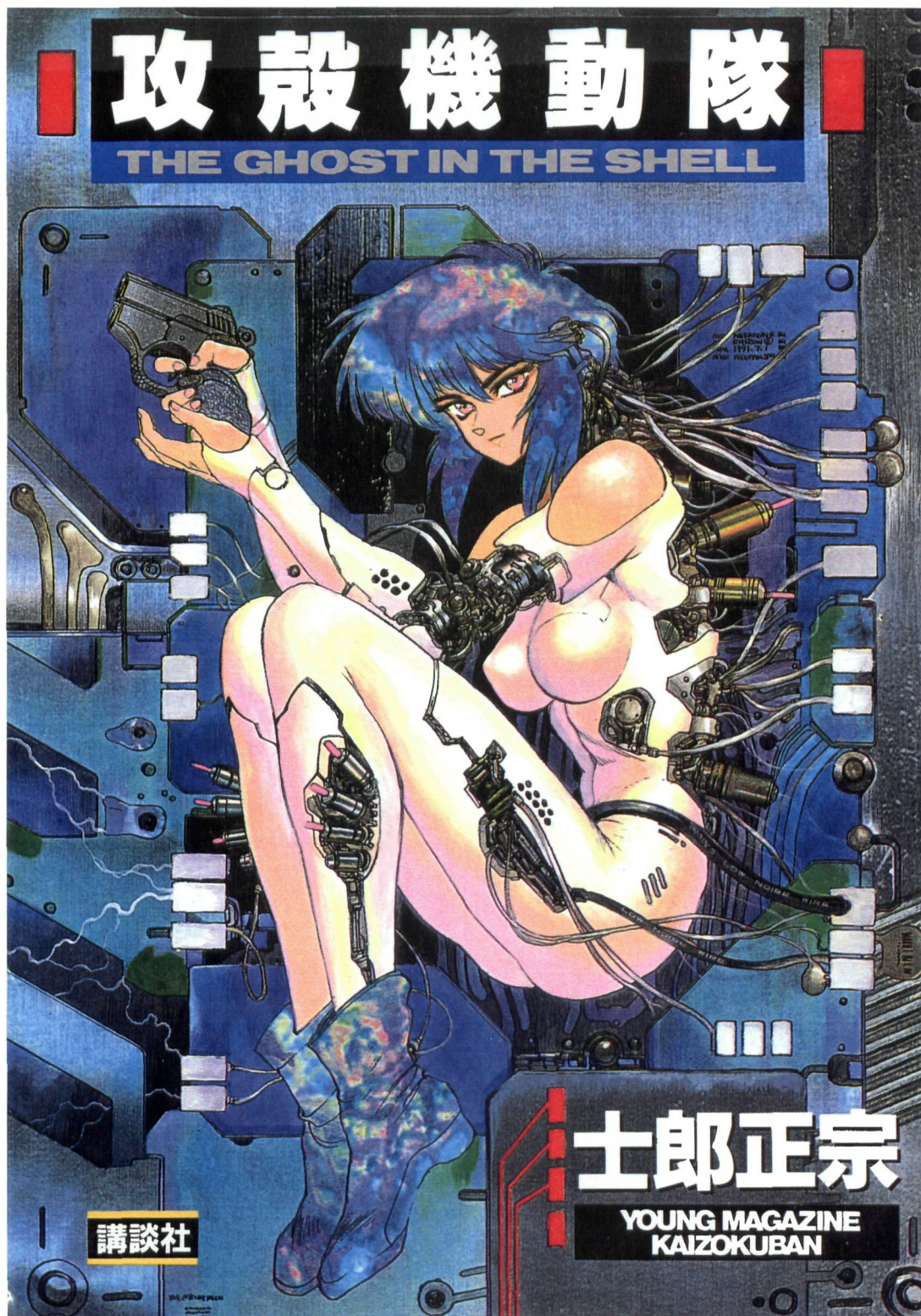


Figure 1: The main character of Ghost in the Shell, Kusanagi Motoko. (Shirow Masamune, Ghost in the Shell, Tokyo: Kodansha, 1991.)



Figure 2: The main characters of Neon Genesis Evangelion. Asuka (left) is half-Japanese and half-German. Shinji (middle) and Rei (right) are Japanese. (Anno Hideaki, dir., Shin Seiki Evangelion, Gainax Studios, 1995-1996.)

Chapter One:

Introduction

The climactic scene in the Japanese animated film Ghost in the Shell involves the cyborg protagonist, who works as a government assassin, "merging" with the villain character, the Puppet Master, who is inhabiting a cyborg body. Both the main character, Kusanagi, and the Puppet Master are portrayed as female, nude, upper torsos of mechanical, manufactured bodies. The "merging" takes place after Kusanagi's arms, legs and much of her torso have been destroyed in a fight to gain access to the equally destroyed body of the Puppet Master. Their bodies are almost mirror images of each other, female upper torsos with prominent breasts, wires and mechanical guts dangling. Even with two female, mechanical torsos, the "merging" is presented very much like a sexual act. Their bodies are laid side by side. Though the bodies are not physically touching except for wires and electrodes, the intimacy of a sexual scene is there. For example, the view cuts between head and shoulder shots of the cyborgs, just as it does in similar bedroom scenes in live-action films. They even occasionally turn their heads to look, longingly perhaps, at each other. In this way the scene mimics a sexual encounter even more.

Their bodies are physically of the same sex, therefore should this scene be read as homosexual? Yet their bodies are

manufactured. The Puppet Master speaks in a masculine voice throughout the film. The protagonist speaks in a comparatively feminine voice throughout the film. Is this an indication of their "true" sex/gender? (Can the cyborg even have a "true" sex/gender?) Should the climactic scene be considered heterosexual because of this? Should it be considered sexual at all?

In the final moments of the film we see our protagonist, her familiar body totally destroyed, in the new body of a young girl, the only thing her fellow agent could find quickly on the black market. The cyborg's ability to change bodies leaves us with the certainty that their sex/gender cannot be dependent on the body they inhabit. If the cyborg body is manufactured, how can there possibly be a sex or gender? And if there is some sort of a cyborg sex/gender, what is it and how can we understand it? These are some of the questions and issues I will be examining in this paper.

Japanese animated movies, referred to as Japanimation or *anime* in Japanese, are extremely popular in Japan, and increasingly so in the rest of the world as well. In the early 1960's, Japan, and the U.S. to a lesser extent, enjoyed the broadcasts of many Japanese animated TV shows, such as Astro Boy, by Tezuka Osamu, the "Walt Disney of Japan," Speed Racer, and Gigantor.¹ Today many of the children's cartoons on local TV are

¹Astro Boy was broadcast in the U.S. on NBC from 1963 to 1964. Kimba the White Lion, also by Tezuka, and Gigantor were both first broadcast in 1966 and Speed Racer in 1967.

Note: Japanese names appear in Japanese order in this thesis: surname first.

drawn from Japan, from Power Rangers to Dragon Ball Z.² The comic book and animated film industry in the U.S. is still considered to be just for children in popular imagination. There are, of course, comic books and animated films in the U.S. that are designed for an adult audience. However, these are only a very small percentage of the overall industry production. In contrast, the industry in Japan has matured with its citizens, incorporating a spectrum of genres and issues that are relevant and interesting to a wide range of ages of readers and viewers. Author of "Look Japan" magazine, Manabe Masami, has said, "Japanimation deals with a wide range of topics like nuclear war and computer-dominated societies, and contains everything from sexy heroines to violent action scenes."³

Marshall McLuhan, technology and media critic, has said, "To behold, use, or perceive any extension of ourselves in technological form is necessarily to embrace it."⁴ Japanese popular culture has undeniably embraced technology. Japanese popular culture has more images of cyborgs, robots, and metal-merged bodies than elsewhere, especially in animated films and comic books. If we examine and analyze the various cyborg images in Japanese popular culture, we can see new ideas about the nature

²Power Rangers is actually a hybrid U.S. and Japanese show. It uses the Japanese actions scenes from the show Zyuranger (1992-1993) and plot scenes with U. S. actors spliced in between.

³Manabe Masami, "The Wonderful World of Anime," Look Japan 43.494 (1997): 17.

⁴Marshall McLuhan, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1965) 55.

of Japan's lived social collective reality, as well as that of the rest of the world. Because of *anime's* growing popularity in the rest of the world, the cyborg also has relevance in the West. Using the cyborg image as a reflection of Japan, we can observe the issues that Japan is struggling with, what concerns dominate its marginal, resistant cultures, as well as its mass media.

In such Japanese animated films as Ghost in the Shell (Oshii Mamoru, 1995), Battle Angel (Fukutomi Hiroshi, 1993), and Neon Genesis Evangelion (Anno Hideaki, 1996) the main cyborg characters present new images in sexuality, gender, and race relations. The main character in Ghost in the Shell, a "female" cyborg, struggles with issues of identity and sexuality. Given the possibility that she has computer-created "memories" and the knowledge that she has a government-created body, she has difficulty constructing her individual subjectivity. Even Western images of male cyborgs are seen struggling with what it means to be human (e.g. Robocop, Terminator.) Donna Haraway, the foremost scholar writing about cyborgs, has said, "Whatever else it is, the cyborg point of view is always about communication, infection, gender, genre, species, intercourse, information, and semiology."⁵ This thesis is a study of the cyborg through Japanese animation and by extension a study of Japan through the cyborg. As such, the cyborg point of view, about intercourse, information, and semiology, is especially illuminating.

In science fiction, as well as in cutting-edge science and

⁵Donna Haraway, "Cyborgs and Symbionts: Living Together in the New World Order," The Cyborg Handbook, ed. Chris Hables Gray (New York: Routledge, 1995) xiv.

technology, there is a being called the cyborg, a combination of organic (human) and cybernetic (machine) pieces. The cyborg destroys the boundary between human and machine by its very definition, and other boundaries by its use and interpretation, as I will explain in Chapter Four. Because the image of the cyborg is purely our own creation, it can show us what we think, fear and desire.

The image of the cyborg body functions as a site of condensation and displacement. It contains on its surface and in its fundamental structure the multiple fears and desires of a culture caught in the process of transformation.⁶

The "multiple fears and desires of a culture" are what we can perceive through an analysis of the cyborg.

Popular culture theorist, Dominic Strinati, has said, "Society has become subsumed within the mass media."⁷ Japanese society is swallowed up within *anime*, therefore images that are central to *anime*, such as that of the cyborg, are extremely important to analyze. My analysis suggests the cyborg creates a subjectivity marked by hybridity, a merging of boundaries, thanks to its merging of human and machine. This translates to a merging of sexes, genders, and races in its presentation, as I will

⁶Jennifer Gonzales, "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research," The Cyborg Handbook, ed. Chris Hables Gray (New York: Routledge, 1995) 267.

⁷Dominic Strinati, An Introduction to Theories of Popular Culture (London: Routledge, 1995) 224.

explain later. Japan's fascination with cyborg *anime* suggests that Japan is siding with this hybridization, the cyborg, over non-hybridization. This thesis will analyze the significance of the choice.

The cyborg invites many different interpretations, especially when it comes to its sex and gender. Because of its construction and the inherent combination of human and machine in the cyborg body, I believe the cyborg can no longer be considered one sex or gender. It is no longer only male or only female. The cyborg is our future, and present, definition of sex and gender and it is a hybrid. As the possibilities of science "fiction" have become our science "reality," this new definition of sex and gender has become vitally important.

The cyborg images we already see have, by definition, blurred the lines of traditional gender, suggesting possibilities of a new, third gender, requisite and essential for the cyborg body. This possibility is a dramatic break from the binary system of male and female, dualisms that are defeated in the cyborg. This is apparent in films like Ghost in the Shell where the main cyborg is an eroticized female body and a masculine killing machine at the same time, creating a body presentation that is neither one nor the other. As our world becomes increasingly cyborg-ized, how we deal with the cyborgs in our imagination reflects on how we deal with the cyborgs in our society--those of us who have been cyborg-ized by prothesis, immunization, or psychopharmacology. The visual depictions of the climactic scene of the film Ghost in the Shell, a sexual-like encounter between two hybrid cyborgs, provides for the creation of a

new third sex/gender. The portrayal of a new gender, a cyborg-gender, in many Japanese animated films and TV shows is a fascinating example of multi-gendered technology in a postmodern, posthuman future.

Cyborg narratives are typically postmodern. Carl Holmberg, a popular culture scholar, believes postmodern cinema is extremely important.

The hugeness of the images literally makes the characters and screen actions larger than life, so much so that by the close of the twentieth century, Baudrillard and others have been prompted to observe how the huge perfections of the silver screen have transformed America into a realm of hyperreality, with North Americans' obsessions to reproduce screen perfections in their daily lives.⁸

This obsession with the screen being larger than life is taking over Japan as well. The animated film industry is huge in Japan and becoming ever larger elsewhere. Sales of *anime*, in the U.S. alone, totaled approximately \$75 million dollars in 1994.⁹

Considering the dichotomies between sex and gender, biology and culture, nature and nurture, male and female, I realize that perhaps humans innately separate the world into a binary system of values and

⁸Carl B. Holmberg, Sexualities and Popular Culture (London: Sage Publications, 1998) 25.

⁹Rick Marin, Trent T. Gegax, "Holy Akira! It's Aeon Flux," Newsweek 14 Aug. 1995: 68.

issues. A *binary* system is an important concept to remember, especially when we consider the binary code that computers use. Computers, the net, and electronics are an intimate part of the cyborg's life. Donna Haraway has said in

Modest Witness@Second Millennium.FemaleMan@Meets OncoMouse™,

In the imploded time-space anomalies of late-twentieth-century transnational capitalism and technoscience, subjects and objects, as well as the natural and artificial, are transported through science-fictional wormholes to emerge as something quite other.¹⁰

Subjects and objects, natural and artificial, are all transformed as something quite other in the cyborg.

Chapter Two:

Popular culture

In order to understand Japan we must look at its popular culture, what its people consume. An analysis of popular culture results in a view of what the people who use and consume the culture think and feel, desire and fear. Robert Matthew in Japanese Science Fiction has this to say about studying literature and other artifacts of popular culture.

¹⁰Donna Haraway, Modest Witness@Second Millenium .FemaleMan@ Meets OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience (New York: Routledge, 1997) 4.

Here, once again, the study of science fiction presents itself as a potentially useful tool; the values explicitly expressed or implicitly inlaid in a literature evoking the enthusiastic support of members of the younger generation are for that very reason more likely than not to figure significantly in the formation of attitudes, policies, and strategies in the years to come. Some of the values may be negative, some positive. In either case they have the potential to be helpful in enabling the observer to broaden and deepen his appreciation of the changing currents in Japanese thought and society.¹¹

Japanese animated films are a good example of the younger generation's interests and concerns. These interests and concerns are going to be significant in future attitudes and policies.

What is popular culture and how can we study it? There are many different definitions of popular culture, each one reflecting a slightly different emphasis. One definition says,

In sum, popular culture includes the human activities, languages, and artifacts that grow and nourish people in communities and that generate observable, describable interest about its events and artifacts, within a community and *between communities*.¹² [original emphasis]

¹¹Robert Matthew, Japanese Science Fiction: A View of a Changing Society. (London: Routledge, 1989) 83.

¹²Holmberg 15.

Another, more simple definition, says "popular culture consists of the expressive elements of daily life."¹³ *Anime* and *manga* are artifacts as well as expressive elements of everyday life in Japan.

Here I would like to discuss some reasons why I think it is vitally important to continue popular culture analyses. Carl B. Holmberg in Sexualities and Popular Culture gives six reasons for studying popular culture; I will mention those pertinent to my discussion. Holmberg states, "It is advantageous to study popular culture and noncanonical cultures because they more accurately reflect the daily life of the vast majority of the peoples of the world."¹⁴ The vast majority of people in Japan read comic books and watch animated movies. Sales of *anime*, in the U.S. alone, totaled approximately \$75 million dollars in 1994.¹⁵ In 1991, comic magazines comprised 35 percent, or 2.1 billion copies, of all books and magazines published in Japan.¹⁶ A 1999 publication gives the higher figure of *manga*, comic books, comprising 40 percent of all printed material in Japan. The most popular weekly comic, Shonen Magazine,

¹³Marilyn T. Motz, John G. Nachbar, Michael T. Marsden, and Ronald J. Ambrosetti, eds., Eye on The Future: Popular Culture Scholarship into the Twenty-First Century (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1994) 10.

¹⁴Holmberg 8.

¹⁵Marin and Gegax 68.

¹⁶Ito Kinko, "Sexism in Japanese Weekly Comic Magazines for Men," Asian Popular Culture, ed. John A. Lent (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1995) 127.

has a weekly distribution of four million copies.¹⁷ Animated films and comic books, therefore, can be a powerful tool in grasping what Japan and its youth, its *anime* watchers and *manga* readers, are consuming in terms of ideas about gender, sexuality, race, and other issues. *Anime* reflects society and society responds to this reflection, which in turn is reflected again in *anime*. This creates a dynamic circular relationship between society and its popular culture artifacts.

Holmberg's next reason for studying popular culture is: "Much of what is canonical was once popular."¹⁸ In 1984, 1.38 billion comic books and magazines were sold in Japan for 2.7 billion U.S. dollars.¹⁹ The fact that *anime*, Japanimation, is extremely popular inside and outside of Japan, makes it a worthy focus of study. Something interesting is going on in *anime* and its popularity should not exclude it from serious study. For years mass/popular culture has been viewed from the aesthetics and tastes of the cultural and intellectual elites. An artifact's popularity in one cultural/historical moment does not automatically mean that it is less stimulating, less inventive and less creative than high culture, high art, or canonical literature. In another cultural/historical moment the best of contemporary *manga* and *anime* may well have entered the canon.

¹⁷Yonezawa Yoshihiro, "The Land of the Comic Book," Nipponia 9 (1999): 26.

¹⁸Holmberg 9.

¹⁹Ito 127.

The last reason I will mention from Holmberg works effectively with the issues of marginalized, minority views within our societies.

Diverse interpretations of individuals' own culture and of other cultures may shed understanding about themselves and others, thus improving the chances of enhancing life by learning, thinking, and acting through another's point of view.²⁰

Variously interpreting a culture adds to the overall understanding of that culture. While a hybrid, queer, or unorthodox interpretation of Japan and the animated cyborg might be uncommon, it does create a fuller picture of Japan's cyborgs, Japanese society, and the rest of the world.

A combination of several theories and definitions of popular culture, a hybrid, might be the perfect thing for studying the hybrid cyborg. Ray B. Browne, considered the founder of popular culture studies, has written with Marshall W. Fishwick in Symbiosis: Popular Culture and Other Fields,

Popular culture is the symbiosis of all the fields, and therefore the most effective overall tool for analyzing and understanding a culture. Restriction of analysis to one 'school' or 'method' or theory twists, distorts and limits true

²⁰Holmberg 9-10.

reality.²¹

Following Browne's advice, I will not restrict myself to one specific school or method regarding popular culture. I will be using a hybrid definition of popular culture, one part of which is semiology. Semiological theories of ideology assume that "it is possible to infer the beliefs and actions of people from an analysis of the ideological content of the popular culture they consume," and this describes what I will be doing with this analysis of *anime*.²² I will also be doing a semiotic analysis of the gender codes portrayed in these animated films. It is possible, I believe, to construe the beliefs and ideas of Japan's populace, and of the *anime* fans on this side of the Pacific as well, from an examination of the culture they consume.

The feminist scholar G. Tuchmann relates the idea of women being "symbolically annihilated," not being portrayed in popular culture, to a notion of a Marxist "reflection hypothesis." The reflection hypothesis says that media reflect the values of their audiences, suggesting "that the mass media reflect the dominant social values in a society. These concern not the society as it really is, but its 'symbolic representation', how it would like to see itself."²³ This Marxist reflection theory does not work completely within the

²¹Ray B. Browne, and Marshall W. Fishwick, eds., Symbiosis: Popular Culture and Other Fields (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1988) v.

²²Strinati 213.

²³Strinati 181-182.

Japanese context, but the idea of a reflection of society in popular culture artifacts is one of great use to this study of *anime*. While I do not believe that there is a simplistic one-to-one ratio of signifier to signified, reflection theory seems like an interesting avenue for popular culture studies.

How a society would like to see itself is what I believe we can see reflected in *anime*, especially in the aspects of gender, technology and the cyborg. The "symbolic representation" that *anime* reflects, of Japan, of young *anime* watchers, and of Western *anime* watchers, is one of the most interesting aspects of its interpretation. Marxist political economy theory, that whomever produces popular culture obviously has the power/economic means in society and supports the dominant ideologies in the images he/she produces, is not entirely correct when discussing Japanese *anime* and *manga*. In Japan there is a symbiotic relationship between the producers and the consumers of *anime* and *manga*, as I will explain. The "symbolic representations" of a culture both reflect and in turn have an influence on what people within that culture believe about themselves, including which identities are acceptable and which are not. *Anime* and *manga* fans who are reworking these media are expanding the acceptable and idealized possibilities for identities, "queering" the hegemonic definitions.

In Japan, this reworking of the mass media is done at a national and local level. There are over 50,000 *manga* fan clubs, called "circles," in Japan today.²⁴ *Anime* and *manga* fan clubs frequently

²⁴Frederik L. Schodt, Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga, (Berkeley, California: Stone Bridge Press, 1996) 37.

rewrite *anime* and *manga* stories, act them out, and distribute them nationwide. These amateur productions, called *dojinshi*, are extremely creative and well-liked, sometimes as much so as the original. The *dojinshi* range from original works to parodies of famous *manga* or *anime*. Another extremely popular fan activity, *cosplay* (costume play), lets Japanese fans dress up as their favorite animated characters.²⁵ The Japanese fans go to great lengths to create authentic costumes, regardless of the fan's natural hair color or original gender (for example, men dressed as Sailor Moon).

Anime and *manga* conventions (similar to science fiction/comic book conventions in North America) also establish a space for these kinds of activities. Major comic book conventions have been held in Tokyo since December 1975. The male/female split at these conventions is forty percent male, sixty percent female.²⁶ Hence the media-created image of the *otaku*, a Japanese *manga* or *anime* fan who is socially inept and obsessed with their favorite *manga* or *anime*, as entirely a male dominated phenomenon is not true. The *dojinshi*, amateur *manga* creations that are made by the fans for the fans, are sold at these *manga* conventions. In 1995, a Tokyo comic book convention called *Komiketto*, a three day event, brought in 300,000 people and featured over 60,000 sellers of *dojinshi*.²⁷ In 1991 the

²⁵Jeff Yang, Dina Gan, Terry Hong, and the staff of A. Magazine, eds., Eastern Standard Time: A Guide to Asian Influence on American Culture from Astro Boy to Zen Buddhism (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1997) 57.

²⁶Schodt Dreamland 40.

²⁷Schodt Dreamland 40.

Komiketto convention fans spent over \$30 million U.S. dollars in 48 hours, not including the \$10 admission price for the 200,000 fans.²⁸ Frederik Schodt has said, regarding these amateur productions made by and for the fans,

A world unto itself, the *manga* convention has become a forum for direct, unself-conscious communication between readers and creators, free from the constraints and pressures of commercialism.²⁹

This direct and unself-conscious link between readers and creators is also seen in commercial publications of *manga* and *anime*. The commercial producers are aware of these amateur productions and frequently were once amateurs themselves.³⁰ These amateur productions and other reworkings of the original animated texts by the fans express the culture the way it would like to see itself, its "symbolic representation." The *dojinshi* allow for a symbiotic relationship between creators and consumers of *manga* and *anime* in Japan that does not yet seem possible in North America.

Postmodern theory, in part, describes the idea that "popular cultural signs and media images increasingly dominate our sense of

²⁸Schodt Dreamland 43.

²⁹Schodt Dreamland 39.

³⁰For example, Takahashi Rumiko, Ishii Hisashi, or the women's group CLAMP, all started in *dojinshi* productions. Schodt Dreamland 42.

reality, and the way we define ourselves and the world around us."³¹ If *anime* and popular culture define us, then what we discover about postmodern popular culture is a discovery about ourselves. Postmodernism embodies a lack of distinction between image (mass media, popular culture) and reality. Postmodernism includes a preoccupation with surfaces and styles, in artifacts as well as reality. Postmodern texts are "diverse, iconoclastic, referential and collage-like."³² Ghost in the Shell exhibits all of the characteristics of a postmodern text, even on its city streets which are a combination of Tokyo/Hong Kong's bright lights and Venice's mysterious canals. In *anime*, like most postmodern texts, there is also little distinction between image and reality. If *anime* reflects Japan, it is a postmodern Japan.

The cyborg as a popular cultural artifact, in films, TV shows, comic books, and science fiction stories, embodies postmodern realities. Postmodern reality is so common within twentieth century cultures that Holmberg has said, referring to Baudrillard's theories, that "what appears to be reality is actually transferred from the dream reality of movies."³³ The dream reality of movies, TV, and popular culture, is our "real" reality, and therefore it is vitally important that we understand it, incorporate it, analyze it, and transform it.

³¹Strinati 224.

³²Strinati 228.

³³Holmberg 251-252.

Movies and their surrounding institutional and industrial contexts are products of a given time and civilization; moreover, motion picture content and culture mirror the concerns, beliefs, myths, fantasies, desires, fears, and aspirations of various social pluralities in both hidden and overt ways. It is, therefore, the goal of popular film critics to detect and reveal these literal and latent thought processes, ideologies, feelings, moods, and discourses with their respective theoretical views and methodologies.³⁴

Anime films and TV shows, too, mirror the beliefs, myths, desires, and fears of Japan, and increasingly of the Western world as well. I believe *anime* reveals covert and overt social beliefs within Japan and within various social pluralities, within Japan and outside of Japan.

The projection of ourselves that popular culture presents includes images of our bodies, our gender roles, and our sexualities. As John Fiske, popular culture theorist, says,

though the body may appear to be where we are most individual, it is also the material form of the body politic, the class body, the racial body, and the body of gender. The struggle for control over the meanings and pleasures (and therefore the behaviors) of the body is crucial because the body is where the social is most convincingly represented as the individual and

³⁴Browne and Fishwick 49.

where politics can best disguise itself as human nature.³⁵

This struggle for control of the body is expressed in the cyborg. Thanks to its natural hybridity, the cyborg displays the class body, the racial body and the body of gender as a transgressed boundary. As I will explain later, the cyborg, as the ultimate bodily transgressor, becomes an effective spokesperson for the postmodern body. Fiske states, "The meanings we speak with our bodies are as much directed and distributed by the agencies of social power as those of television or of the catalog from which we furnish our homes."³⁶ This media-directed, -distributed, and -controlled body is the fragile meeting ground for discussions of gender, sex, and race.

Popular culture is usually produced by the media and the elite, reworked by the masses, and interpreted by any spectator who so wishes. Cultural artifacts are frequently consumed and reworked by people whose gender, sexuality, or race have been marginalized by society. Fiske sees popular culture as resistance culture, the oppressed reworking their mass-produced and mass-consumed items through the filter of their own lives and experiences. He states,

Popular texts must offer popular meanings and pleasures--
popular meanings are constructed out of the relevances between
the text and everyday life, popular pleasures derive from the
production of these meanings by the people from the power to

³⁵John Fiske, Understanding Popular Culture (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989) 70.

³⁶Fiske 35.

produce them. [original emphasis]³⁷

The popular pleasures derived from watching *anime* are produced by the spectator. Because of its hybridity, representing a merging of opposing dualisms, the animated cyborg brings out a queer interpretation of its gender, sexuality, and race, as I will explain more fully later.

As Fiske says, "Popular pleasures must be those of the oppressed, they must contain elements of the oppositional, the evasive, the scandalous, the offensive, the vulgar, the resistant."³⁸ Fiske means that these elements, of the oppositional and the oppressed, are already contained in popular culture pleasures. This works well with our images and theories about the cyborg. The cyborg is marginalized because of its natural hybridity. The cyborg is pleasurable because it contains elements of the oppressed and offensive, as I will explain in Chapter Four. The "queerness" of the cyborg's situation, being a natural hybrid between two opposites, allows an identification by those oppressed. For a pleasurable reflection of their own sexualities, genders, and races, spectators are reworking the cyborg's image into popular pleasures, "queer" or otherwise.

I am using a definition of a "queer" reading which encompasses a wide variety of sexualities, genders, and desires. The term "queer" is used to represent alternative sexualities, not just homosexuality,

³⁷Fiske 126.

³⁸Fiske 127.

but bisexual, transgender, and other alternative sexualities. Maria Pramaggiore, editor of and contributor to RePresenting BiSexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire, explains a similar epistemology using the term "bisexual." She states,

Bisexual epistemologies--ways of apprehending, organizing, and intervening in the world that refuse one-to-one correspondences between sex acts and identity, between erotic objects and sexualities, between identification and desire--acknowledge fluid desires and their continual construction and deconstruction of the desiring subject.³⁹

Refusing a one-to-one correspondence between various aspects of sexuality, gender and desire is a common trait of the cyborg, as I will explain later. These "bisexual" readings and epistemologies are possible for the cyborg.

Pramaggiore defines her use of the word "bisexual" as "suggesting that a male or female or multiply gendered subject may construct her/his/its/their sexual object choice as 'both/and' instead of 'either/or.'"⁴⁰ Her definition departs from Freud's definition of "constitutional bisexuality," the inability to identify

³⁹Maria Pramaggiore, "BI-ntroduction: Epistemologies of the Fence," RePresenting BiSexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire, eds. Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 3.

⁴⁰Maria Pramaggiore, "Straddling the Screen: Bisexual Spectatorship and Contemporary Narrative Film," RePresenting BiSexualities: Subjects and Cultures of Fluid Desire, eds. Donald E. Hall and Maria Pramaggiore (New York: New York University Press, 1996) 293.

with either the mother or the father, which is similar to Haraway's use of the word "bisexual." I agree with Pramaggiore, rather than Freud and Haraway, and will be referring to bisexuality as Pramaggiore defines it. The use of this term "bisexuality," however, does not exclude other sexualities which might also fall under the term "queer," as I explained earlier.

A bisexual, or queer or omni-sexual, reading of a narrative does not require a bisexual spectator.⁴¹ Pramaggiore has said, "Audience members [...] do not produce oppositional readings of films solely on the basis of their sexual identities; the text itself must in some manner invite alternative readings."⁴² Pramaggiore goes on to state,

reading a film bisexually has less to do with aligning one's identity with a particular character (on the basis of male/female sex distinctions or on the basis of activity/passivity) and has more to do with the spectatorial difficulty of clearly distinguishing between wanting to 'be' a character (Mulvey's ego-ideal) and wanting to 'have' a character (scopophilic, fetishistic, erotic possession through the gaze).⁴³

⁴¹Pramaggiore distinguishes between bisexual identity and bisexual spectatorship practices. The latter refers to "the activity of viewing by spectators, regardless of gender or sexual identity, which acknowledges that same and opposite sex desire are not mutually exclusive." Pramaggiore "Straddling" 294.

⁴²Pramaggiore "Straddling" 272.

⁴³Pramaggiore "Straddling" 282.

A bisexual reading of a film allows for alternative desires, representations, and characterizations. I will be reading these cyborg films with this idea of "bisexual" spectatorship.

Pramaggiore also emphasizes that a bisexual reading is especially possible in contemporary films.

Bisexual reading practices may be invited by recent mainstream films that depict fluid eroticisms and nonheterosexual desires; in other words, these film texts may construct a "fence-sitting" spectator.⁴⁴

"Fence-sitting" is one way to imagine the cyborg. As I will explain in Chapter Four, the cyborg blends various dichotomies within its own body, leaving it as a "fence-sitter," caught between the two different options, or sides of the fence. Pramaggiore also states,

It may be the case that the ambiguities, doubleness, and 'both/and' of bisexual desire are encoded in contemporary films and may, in part, make bisexual reading practices possible and necessary.⁴⁵

I suggest that many, perhaps most, contemporary cyborg films do invite an alternative "bisexual" reading by the spectator. This "bisexual" reading and spectatorship is "possible and necessary"

⁴⁴Pramaggiore "Straddling" 274.

⁴⁵Pramaggiore "Straddling" 275.

according to Pramaggiore. This type of reading of a text is important because an alternative interpretation has an influence on what people within the culture believe about themselves.

The popular cultural image of the cyborg is a hybrid and that hybridity can be expressed with terms from queer theory. I would suggest that the cyborg is omni-sexual, multi-sexual, or in our current language, bisexual, not as we know bisexuality, but as a merging of binary genders, as I will explain more fully later. A "bisexual" reading or interpretation of the cyborg body is crucial because the cyborg body is the body politic, the class body and the gendered body. Jo Eadie, a cultural critic, has said that

the presence of a bisexual figure in film is an indicator that a cultural tension is being breached, whose contours the bisexual enables the audience to negotiate, and whose dangers the bisexual always embodies.⁴⁶

The cyborg, as a bisexual figure, expresses and negotiates cultural tensions. I would argue that those cultural tensions are in the areas of sex, gender, and race. Paying attention to the bisexual, queer, hybrid cyborg establishes a more accurate understanding of Japan's cultural tensions regarding sex, gender, and race.

The fantasies, concerns, and desires of the mainstream, as well as of various other groups, are expressed in the body of the cyborg.

⁴⁶Jo Eadie, "'That's Why She is Bisexual': Contexts for a Bisexual Visibility," The Bisexual Imagery: Representation, Identity, and Desire, eds. BI Academic Intervention (London: Cassel, 1997) 142.

Therefore, I hope to detect and reveal these concerns and desires within the Japanese animated cyborg. I will be reading the animated films, with ideas from film criticism, as postmodern texts, narratives, and popular artifacts. As a Caucasian American female who has studied Japanese culture for many years, my readings of the gender codes in these Japanese films are not so much a reading against the grain as they are an educated understanding of Japanese, and North American, gender coding. Utilizing a semiological analysis of gender codes, a hypothesis about reality's reflection within popular culture, and ideas and issues in recent queer, and particularly bisexual, theory, I hope to reveal Japanese culture within *anime*. With so much of Japan's myths, fantasies, and desires wrapped up in animation, it is only natural to give it our close attention.

Chapter Three:

Anime

Most *anime* is drawn, quite literally, from its closely related sibling, the comic book or *manga*. The popularity, notoriety and outrageousness of the Japanese comic is well documented in other sources.⁴⁷ Though I will be analyzing the cyborg narratives in their

⁴⁷See Fredrick Schodt, *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics* (New York: Kodansha International, 1983), Susan Napier, "Vampires, Psychic Girls, Flying Women and Sailor Scouts: Four Faces of the Young Female in Japanese Popular Culture," *Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures*, ed. D. P. Martinez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 91-109, Ito Kinko, "Sexism in Japanese Weekly Comic

anime format, since some of the most popular *anime* have been derived from *manga*, its issues are pertinent as well.

It is not uncommon in Japan to see a business man reading a comic on his way to work. It is also not uncommon to see a high school girl, a grade school boy, or a middle aged housewife each reading their own different type of comic book. Many people might think of comics as mostly a children's genre because of their popularity among children in North America. Some of the most popular animated TV shows from Japan are geared towards children, for example, "Sailor Moon," whose school girl main character turns into a superhero, as well as "Pokemon," where grade school protagonists collect cute little 'pocket monsters' to play games against other kids. These are the latest craze in the U.S. and Canada, designed to entice children to want more cute fuzzy little toys, games, and merchandise. However comics and animated films cover many other genres and types, at least in Japan. It's not just for kids any more.

Comics are sold to a wide adult audience in Japan and "embrace all adult genres."⁴⁸ These include historical drama, romance, comedy, science fiction, cyberpunk, and even pornography. Frederik Schodt, a prominent scholar of Japanese *anime* and *manga* has said, "Comics, once mainly for children, now are read by nearly all ages and comprise

Magazines for Men," Asian Popular Culture, ed. John A. Lent (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1995) 127-137 for more information about Japanese comic books.

⁴⁸Peter M. Nichols, "At Mickey's House: a Quiet Welcome for Distant Cousins," New York Times 1 Feb. 1998: Sec. 2, 37.

nearly 30 percent of all printed matter in Japan..."⁴⁹ 1999 sources put that figure at 40 percent.⁵⁰ More recent statistics show that more than half of all books published in Japan are comic books.⁵¹ In 1991, 2.1 billion comic books were sold in Japan. The sale of comic books, "Japanimation," and popular culture artifacts to other countries is becoming Japan's number one cultural export.⁵²

These figures are only going to get larger. *Anime* fans in North America were once an underground subculture. But with the success of recent animated films in Japan, marketers in the rest of the world have taken notice. The animated movie, Mononokehime (Princess Mononoke) (Miyazaki Hayao, 1997), became the highest grossing movie in Japan's history when it was released in 1997.⁵³ The Disney Company, the giant in American animation, as well as other large entertainment companies have discovered the possibility of a lucrative market in Japanimation. In 1999, Disney released a dubbed version of Mononokehime in hopes of achieving the same success. The cyborg film, Ghost in the Shell, was released simultaneously in Japan, the U.S. and the U.K. in 1995, a feat unheard of before then.

⁴⁹Frederik L. Schodt, Inside the Robot Kingdom: Japan, Mechatronics, and the Coming Robotopia (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1988). 73.

⁵⁰Yonezawa 26.

⁵¹Nichols 37.

⁵²Jose Manuel Tesoro, "Asia Says Japan is Top of the Pops," AsiaWeek 5 Jan. 1996: 36.

⁵³Richard Corliss, Georgia Harbison, and Jeffery Ressler, "Amazing Anime," Time, 22 Nov. 1999, Can. ed.: 68.

A year later, Ghost in the Shell became the first Japanese movie to hit Number One on Billboard magazine's video sales chart.⁵⁴ That kind of success and popularity has piqued the interest of world-wide corporations and helped spread the word of *anime*.

Anime and *manga*, because of the nature of their media, have the ability to portray reality as we dream it, not necessarily as it really exists right now. Susan Napier has said,

unlike representational media such as television or film which rely on realism, the union of art and words which produces *manga*, both in comic and video, allows for a particularly wide variety of story formats and characters, often of a notably fantastic variety.⁵⁵

This world of fantasy is extremely relevant when dealing with issues of sexuality and gender that are indescribable at the present time. The cyborg, as imagined in *anime*, does not exist in our reality right now. Yet it can be reworked through *anime* with much greater complexity than it can in representational media.

Within *anime*, especially the science fiction, fantasy or cyberpunk areas of it, one image occurs more frequently than many others. This is the image of the cyborg, the replicant, the android,

⁵⁴Manabe 17.

⁵⁵Susan Napier, "Vampires, Psychic Girls, Flying Women and Sailor Scouts: Four Faces of the Young Female in Japanese Popular Culture," Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture: Gender, Shifting Boundaries and Global Cultures, ed. D. P. Martinez (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 93.

and the partial human.⁵⁶ I include in this the frequent image of human machine combinations, such as giant mechanical fighting robots with human pilots. The *mecha* suit genre of shows, as they are known in Japan, are extremely popular, as evidenced by a few of the more well-known ones such as Robotech, Gundam Wing, and The Guyver. Thanks to its popularity and intriguing presentations, the prominent figure of the cyborg in *anime* is necessarily quite interesting. Its portrayal is sometimes quite graphically and sexually violent, as well. While the science fiction and cyborg films are very popular with adolescent boys, the films themselves are not geared solely to male or female viewers. Cyborg *anime* are popular with viewers of both genders, as well as within differing ages groups, though arguably more popular with youth than older adults. Since the cyborg figure, including the *mecha* suits variety, is so frequently portrayed in *anime* it deserves some specific attention.

Susan Napier has said in "Vampires, Psychic Girls, Flying Women and Sailor Scouts: Four Faces of the Young Female in Japanese Popular Culture,"

Disturbing though the cyborg trend may be, it still seems clear that it is in science fiction and fantasy that we can find some of the most exciting and creative explorations of the female in

⁵⁶The cyborg is a combination of human and machine (e.g. Robocop). The replicant is a genetically-enhanced manufactured copy of a human (e.g. Blade Runner's replicants). The android is an artificial humanoid, with artificial body parts and artificial intelligence (e.g. Star Trek's character Data). The partial human is a human with technological enhancements, for example the built-in ability to access the Internet.

Japanese society.⁵⁷

This exploration of the female within the cyborg trend and in Japanese society is exactly what I am analyzing. It does seem that some of the most interesting interpretations of the female are found in narratives that feature the cyborg body. Ito Kinko has written in "Sexism in Japanese Weekly Comic Magazines for Men," that "Some values, beliefs, and norms of society, including those between the sexes, are explicitly portrayed in these [comic] magazines."⁵⁸ The explicitly portrayed interactions between the sexes is observable in the cyborg *anime* as well as in less fantastic varieties of *anime*. Japan's views on sex and gender can be expressed and referenced in these animated narratives. Therefore, studying the animated cyborg, with the idea that it reflects its culture, becomes immediately relevant for understanding women, and other marginalized groups, in modern Japan.

Part I: Cyberpunk

Cyberpunk is the literary genre most closely related to cyborg *anime*. Since this paper will rely heavily on literary criticism, some discussion of related literature is necessary to set up the critical stage. Cyberpunk evolved out of the science fiction tradition, as evidenced in its emphasis on technology, the future,

⁵⁷Napier 105.

⁵⁸Ito 133.

and any number of possible apocalypses. It is also closely related to postmodernism. Cyberpunk, postmodern science fiction, and cyborg anime are representing our contemporary lives at the point of our interaction with technology and the future.

While there is no one definition for the cyberpunk genre, Larry McCaffery has written in Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction,

Cyberpunk's narrative strategies can be shown to unfold in a typically postmodernist way: mixing together genres, borrowing devices from the cinema, computer systems, and MTV, infusing the rhythms of its prose with those of rock music and TV advertising, pastiching prior literary forms and otherwise playing with literary elements, and, above all, adopting the familiar postmodernist device of developing familiar 'mythic' structures and materials which can then be undercut and exploited for different purposes.⁵⁹

The mythic structures set up in Neon Genesis Evangelion involve "Second Impact," a moment when the world was partially destroyed, which is used as part of the characters' cultural history. "Second Impact" is referred to in much the same way as people now refer to World War II. Another example of cyberpunk's postmodern pastiche can be found in Bubblegum Crisis: The First Episode half of which is a music video.

⁵⁹Larry McCaffery, ed., introduction, Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991) 14.

Postmodernism's emphasis on collage, sensory overload, signs without reference, and nostalgia are also typical characteristics of most cyberpunk.⁶⁰ Blade Runner (Ripley Scott, 1982) is considered a quintessential cyberpunk movie. Its street scenes are full of advertisements in foreign languages for products that don't exist; its views of the city are full of constantly exploding fires and dark trash everywhere. Its everyday world is so full of fusions, collages, and sensory overload, not to mention signs without reference, as to make most of its viewers either extremely confused or elated. The animated films, Ghost in the Shell, Bubblegum Crisis and Akira, among others, have been heavily influenced by Blade Runner. They even contain some oblique reference to it. For example, in Bubblegum Crisis, one of the main characters sings in a band called "Priss and the Replicants," an obvious reference to the character Priss, a replicant in Blade Runner. Nostalgia for a previous version of the world is expressed in all of these animated films as well, even if it is as obscure as a reference to Neo-Tokyo, Tokyo 3, or Old Tokyo. The Tokyo we know is obviously long gone, much to the dismay of many of the characters in these films.

Other characteristics of cyberpunk, known as "the four Cs," are corporations, crimes, computers, and corporeality.⁶¹ As shall be seen, these are all characteristics of Ghost in the Shell. In Ghost in the Shell, the government agencies are seen as evil corporations.

⁶⁰McCaffery 26.

⁶¹Frances Bonner, "Separate Development: Cyberpunk in Film and TV," Fiction 2000: Cyberpunk and the Future of Narrative, eds. George Slusser and Tom Shippey (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1992) 191.

The main character is related to crimes and computers since she works in a special unit dealing with cybercriminals and as a cyborg she accesses the net frequently in her own head. Her issues regarding her body and her material existence also place Ghost in the Shell squarely in the corner of cyberpunk. A frenetic pace, inverted millenarianism, built environment, excess, and trash over everything are also characteristics that define a cyberpunk work.⁶² A glance at Ghost in the Shell or Akira shows all of these things. All of the cyborg anime are set in a built (and heavily modified) environment. Akira, especially, exhibits a frenetic pace and inverted millenarianism, a belief that the future is dark and bleak. Most cyborg anime exhibit the characteristics of cyberpunk.

These characteristics of cyberpunk are also consistent across cultures. Takayuki Tatsumi has written in "The Japanese Reflection of Mirrorshades" about the cultural borrowing between Japan and the West that is particularly prominent in cyberpunk, as well as in anime. He states,

What cyberpunks seem to consume is not merely Japan, but their own science fiction projected in the future called Japan, whereas what the Japanese audience seems to exhaust is not merely American SF of the 1980s, but their own image synchronic with cyberpunk.⁶³

⁶²Bonner 191, 202.

⁶³Takayuki Tatsumi, "The Japanese Reflection of Mirrorshades," Storming the Reality Studio: A Casebook of Cyberpunk and Postmodern Science Fiction, ed. Larry McCaffery (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1991) 372.

Western cyberpunk frequently uses Japan as a background, a setting, or a cultural motif. For example, cyberpunk author William Gibson's novel Idoru is set in a Neo-Japan and focuses on a Japanese pop idol. Japanese authors and readers frequently use cyberpunk images of Japan as their own images of Japan. Producers and consumers of Japanese popular culture seem to like the idea of their future as predicted by cyberpunk novelists, as well as predicted in their own cyberpunk *anime*.

Science fiction and cyberpunk are frequently the vehicles for representing cyborg subjectivity. Some very pertinent questions are raised by the portrayal of cyborgs in science fiction.

How and how much the machine part of a cyborg alters the personality and identity--even the humanness--of the person into whose body it is incorporated are vexing questions that form the core of many science fiction stories.⁶⁴

These identity questions about alterations of cyborg bodies are played out in *anime*, including the *mecha* suits variety. Where are the distinctions between the human and the mechanical parts of the cyborg? And if there are none, what does this make the cyborg? As we shall see in the next chapter, Donna Haraway, among others, theorizes about what the cyborg has become and creates useful

⁶⁴Anne Hudson Jones, "The Cyborg (R)Evolution in Science Fiction," The Mechanical God: Machines in Science Fiction, eds. Thomas P. Dunn and Richard D. Erlich (London: Greenwood Press, 1982) 203.

metaphors for thinking about animated cyborgs. This is important because the popular culture image of the cyborg is reflecting our ideas about sex, gender and race.

Chapter Four:

The Cyborg

The word "cyborg," coined by Manfred Clynes in 1960, is a shortened version of "cybernetic organism." This is a merging of communications and autonomic control systems (cybernetic) and the human organic (organism.) Donna Haraway states that the cyborg is "the illegitimate offspring of militarism and patriarchal capitalism..."⁶⁵ Created by NASA to allow astronauts to adapt to space, the images and possible uses of the cyborg can now be reimagined and reclaimed through science fiction and lived social reality.

There are many motifs in science fiction used to represent the human/machine combination, from the Bionic Man to the cyborg. The cyborg as a "real" identity as imagined by *anime* does not yet exist. The technology for creating a human-machine hybrid, like an Eva from Neon Genesis Evangelion or the main cyborg in Ghost in the Shell, is

⁶⁵Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," Socialist Review 80 (1985): 68.

just beyond our grasp, but getting closer everyday.⁶⁶ The cyborg's current status, however, is terribly important. The editors of The Cyborg Handbook have said,

There are many actual cyborgs among us in society. Anyone with an artificial organ, limb or supplement (like a pacemaker), anyone reprogrammed to resist disease (immunized) or drugged to think/behave/feel better (psychopharmacology) is technically a cyborg.⁶⁷

So the cyborg is a product of science, as well as science fiction. We can all be seen as cyborgs, whether we see ourselves that way or not, because of our immunization and dependence on technology. We already are this most (post)modern of "monsters," the cyborg. The way the cyborg as us is imagined is extremely important.

Part I: Donna Haraway

The first person to release a cyborg into our postmodern reality was Donna Haraway with "A Manifesto for Cyborgs" in 1985. Haraway's radical vision describes modern society as a society of cyborgs. She

⁶⁶The Eva from Neon Genesis Evangelion is a large robot-like creature that requires a human pilot to function. The cyborg in Ghost in the Shell is a human-like machinic body with an organic brain.

⁶⁷Chris Hables Gray, Steven Mentor, and Heidi J. Figueroa-Sarriera, "Cyborgology: Constructing the Knowledge of Cybernetic Organisms," The Cyborg Handbook, ed. Chris Hables Gray (New York: Routledge, 1995) 2.

uses the cyborg as a metaphor for the issues, problems, and realities of our current postmodern society. Haraway theorizes a postmodernism that links technoscience, feminism, and liberation politics in the body of the cyborg.

Haraway recognizes the binary opposites that most people see within sex and gender, as well as within science and technology. Haraway states,

One of my premises is that most American socialists and feminists see deepened dualisms of mind and body, animal and machine, idealism and materialism in the social practices, symbolic formulations, and physical artifacts associated with 'high technology' and scientific culture.⁶⁸

Overcoming these dualisms, she believes, will give us the ability to create images of the cyborg that we need and can use. Making these changes will alter all political and social positions now and in the future. As Haraway states, "I am making an argument for the cyborg as a fiction mapping our social and bodily reality and as an imaginative resource suggesting some very fruitful couplings."⁶⁹ Her fruitful couplings are of great use in understanding current gender, social, and political issues and in imagining our way into a future where these issues can be treated.

Haraway's work joined technology and science with progressive

⁶⁸Haraway, "Manifesto" 71.

⁶⁹Haraway, "Manifesto" 66.

socialism and radical feminism. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay has said about Donna Haraway,

Haraway combined a form of radical pragmatism that refused to entertain any concept of a natural, given meaning to the world, with a feminist utopian dream of global networks working for social justice and ecological health. Her cyborg was universal--every being could be seen as a multiply determined node in a field of interactions dominated by technology.⁷⁰

If every being is a multiply determined node dominated by technology, every being is a cyborg. The cyborg is truly a universal myth about all of us. Haraway encouraged us to re-create the world, not based on patriarchal capitalism, but on a new form of cyborg socialism. She suggested that the cyborg ontology be used for political empowerment of women as well as other marginalized groups. The cyborg, as our ontology, is essential and inevitable according to Haraway. In a more straightforward and simplified way, if we believe the cyborg is us, then we need to imagine a future we would like, with gender boundaries, mergers, or absences that we can stand, according to Haraway's logic. Therefore, Haraway sees a hybrid other sex/gender, like the cyborg's, as extremely necessary. The way the cyborg is imagined is the way we are imagined.

⁷⁰Istvan Csicsery-Ronay, "The Cyborg and the Kitchen Sink: The Salvation Story of No Salvation Story," Science Fiction Studies 25.3 (1998): 510.

There are scholars who disagree with Haraway, who find she did not include enough in her cyborg call-to-arms. Abby Wilkerson is one of these Haraway critics. Wilkerson has said in "Ending at the Skin: Sexuality and Race in Feminist Theorizing,"

Haraway's ["Manifesto for Cyborgs"] is fertile ground for examining how (hetero)sexual and (white) racial norms are reproduced, sometimes in ways that contradict the author's stated intentions. She brings these tensions to the fore at various points, only to retreat rapidly, while in other passages, her imagery reinscribes the very norms she wishes to critique.⁷¹

Haraway states quite clearly that she writes from a socialist, feminist, scientific, white, middle-class point of view. As Wilkerson has said, Haraway wants alternative views yet seems to reinscribe many of the traditional norms that she claims the cyborg problematizes.

Wilkerson goes on to criticize Haraway for her exclusion of bisexuality within her cyborg myth.

Haraway refuses to link the cyborg to bisexuality, a dismissal she does not explain. [...] We must not assume that she agrees with lesbian writers who have rejected bisexual women on radical feminist grounds, or with blatant prejudices

⁷¹Abby Wilkerson, "Ending at the Skin: Sexuality and Race in Feminist Theorizing," Hypatia 12.3 (1997): 165.

against bisexuals perpetrated by many conservatives.
Haraway's feminist and radical politics do not explain her
remark; they only make it more ambiguous.⁷²

Haraway states emphatically what she believes the cyborg is and is
not. Haraway writes,

The cyborg is a creature in a post-gender world; it has no
truck with bisexuality, pre-Oedipal symbiosis, [...] or other
seductions to organic wholeness...⁷³

In a post-gender world, a bisexual or post-gender merging of both
sexes is exactly what we will have. Critics have argued that the
cyborg, by Haraway's own definitions, seems to be the perfect
bisexual, blurring the boundary between male and female. Ann
Kaloski has said,

[Haraway's] recognition that knowledge is both located
(partial) and global (connected) invites--or rather, demands--
-that bisexuality both invent its own techno-myths, and also
be part of the integrated circuit which is contemporary
Earth. In this scheme bisexuality cannot help but be

⁷²Wilkerson 167.

⁷³Haraway, "Manifesto" 67.

cyborg.⁷⁴

Yet bisexuality is an issue Haraway does not address beyond her simple statement of the cyborg's lack.⁷⁵

The concept of *otherness*, which the cyborg typifies and which Haraway discusses, leads to imagining many new possibilities in the realms of sex, gender, and race. As I quoted earlier, Haraway mentions this otherness: "subjects and objects, as well as the natural and artificial, are transported through science-fictional wormholes to emerge as something quite *other*."⁷⁶ [emphasis added] Haraway mentions the cyborg-other but never takes it far enough, nor does she allow it to take her far enough. Wilkerson says, "perhaps Haraway intends the cyborg to disrupt the normative status of heterosexuality. If so, this could be made clearer."⁷⁷ Haraway wants the cyborg-other to be more than a white, middle-class, heterosexual other, but she seems unable to achieve it.

Yet Haraway's work has been extremely influential. Haraway

⁷⁴Ann Kaloski, "Bisexuals Making Out with Cyborgs: Politics, Pleasure, Con/Fusion," Journal of Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Identity 2.1 (1997): 49.

⁷⁵Haraway's 1985 use of the word "bisexuality" is similar to Freud's idea of constitutional bisexuality: identification with both sexes (or inability to identify with either mother or father) rather than desire for both sexes. In that sense bisexuality may be an illusory appeal to wholeness. In contrast, I am working from a sense of bisexuality derived from Pramaggiore and others, one that better suits cyborg reality. It states that nonsingular desires may be detached from sex and gender oppositions.

⁷⁶Haraway, Modest Witness 4.

⁷⁷Wilkerson 168.

and other scholars have used the cyborg vision to analyze literature, film, politics, and technology. With a PhD in biology, she brings unique views to what is usually the domain of the (male) humanities-trained (Western) theorist. Created to explore political needs, the cyborg as Haraway imagined it has become us; the cyborg is our ontology. The techno-philic postmodern world inscribes itself on the cyborg body. It is up to us to deal with that cyborg body, our bodies.

Part II: Transgressed Boundaries

As the editors of The Cyborg Handbook stated, we already are cyborgs thanks to modern medicine and modern science. So what is the cyborg exactly? Haraway states, "The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century."⁷⁸ As a fictional experience the cyborg can express any aspect of our real lived experience. While the cyborg is usually a product of science fiction, its relation to our "real" lived experiences is the connection that Haraway explores.

Haraway asserts that the cyborg blurs boundaries, including the dichotomies that lie at the heart of Western philosophy, religion and even science. As a hybrid, the cyborg body exemplifies the border war raging between humans and machines. In trying to keep that border closed to intruders, a conflict between various dualities ranges in and over the cyborg body. "The cyborg

⁷⁸Haraway, "Manifesto" 66.

becomes a metaphor for the blurring of any dichotomy..."⁷⁹ As Haraway states,

The stakes in the border war have been the territories of production, reproduction, and imagination. This essay is an argument for *pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries and for *responsibility* in their construction.⁸⁰ [original emphasis]

Anyone familiar with the image of the Borg, a human-machine collective from the Star Trek TV series, can see that reproduction and imagination are some of the issues the cyborg raises. Production, reproduction and imagination are important aspects of our own lives as well as the contested areas of the cyborg's life. Construct your own cyborg boundaries responsibly, Haraway suggests, enjoy blurring and crossing them.

In this way Haraway allows for, requests, and requires confusion of boundaries, between male and female, human and machine, and other hierarchical dualisms. Haraway's myth

claim[s] an ironic and perhaps tongue-in-cheek solidarity with all outsiders, all the Others that formed the Great Paradigmatic Pool of Aliens for [science fiction]: women, machines, animals, non-Western peoples...⁸¹

⁷⁹Viviane Casimir, "Data and Dick's Deckard: Cyborg as Problematic Signifier," Extrapolation 38.4 (Winter 1997): 279.

⁸⁰Haraway, "Manifesto" 66.

⁸¹Csicsery-Ronay 511.

In claiming solidarity with all outsiders, Haraway believes the cyborg becomes the ultimate hybrid, and therefore the ultimate hero for racially and sexually marginalized groups.

Haraway says that her cyborg myth is about "transgressed boundaries, potent fusions, and dangerous possibilities."⁸² She defines the cyborg as opposing dichotomies. Since it is a natural blend of the oppositions, human and machine, depictions of the cyborg promulgate the transgressing of those boundaries, either in positive or negative ways. The "potent fusions" Haraway mentions are the unique hybrids that the cyborg creates, a melding of opposing dualisms. In animated cyborg narratives, such as Ghost in the Shell and Neon Genesis Evangelion, the cyborg creates a fusion of male and female, of sexed and non-sexed, a potent combination. Haraway's "dangerous possibilities" refers to the use of this myth within contemporary political and social activities, allowing the disadvantaged to fight for their future.

Claudia Springer, writing in Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Postindustrial Age, argues quite strongly that contemporary cultural conflicts over sexuality and gender are played out in the body of the cyborg.⁸³ She agrees that the cyborg exemplifies transgressed boundaries. Springer writes,

⁸²Haraway, "Manifesto" 71.

⁸³Claudia Springer, Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Postindustrial Age (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1996) 10.

When the boundaries between human and artificial collapse, all of the other dualities dissolve, and their two parts become indistinguishable.... Transgressed boundaries, in fact, are a central feature of postmodernism, and the cyborg is the ultimate transgressed boundary.⁸⁴

As she suggests, the cyborg is also a pertinent metaphor for postmodernism, thanks to its transgressed boundaries. The loss of the division between human and machine, as in the cyborg, leads to a loss of divisions between other hierarchial oppositions, which relates to postmodernism's pastiche, collage, and lack of distinction between images and reality.

The cyborg is a hybrid being, a hybridization of science and nature, human and machine. As Csicsery-Ronay states,

In a world of cyborgs, hierarchial distinctions between human and animal, human and machine, mind and nature, natural and artificial, or male and female, are fetishes for evading the messy truth that there is no purity in the world.⁸⁵

Hierarchial distinctions disappear within the cyborg. This is because no one, no cyborg either, is purely human or purely machine, purely male or female. With no purity, but with freedom of imagination, the cyborg easily becomes the most important

⁸⁴Springer, Electronic Eros 34.

⁸⁵Csicsery-Ronay 510.

metaphor for subjectivity/ontology in the twenty-first century.

Part III: The Gender Boundary

Several scholars have described the cyborg body as always pertaining to gender, always transgressing boundaries. One of these scholars, Claudia Springer, has written in Electronic Eros: Bodies and Desire in the Postindustrial Age,

In the arena of fictional representation the imagery of human fusion with artificial components is replete with metaphors pertaining to sex and gender. Representations of technology have long been gendered and eroticized, so this is not a new phenomenon, but an analysis of recent imagery reveals the particular desires and fears of the late twentieth century, a time when the future of human beings in any form, male or female, can no longer be taken for granted.⁸⁶

The fears and desires of our time revolve around the cyborg's ambiguity in sexual, gendered, and racial terms. "[The cyborg] offers ambiguity at the precise moment when the particulars of our social locations must not only be alluded to but scrutinized with care..."⁸⁷ The ambiguity of the cyborg is here, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, because our "social

⁸⁶Springer Electronic Eros 48.

⁸⁷Wilkerson 169.

locations," our knowledge of ourselves, our place in gender and racial hierarchies, must be well scrutinized. The cyborg's ambiguity reveals our particular desires and fears about gender/racial hierarchies.

Judith Halberstam has discussed the topic of cyborgs and technology in popular imagination as gendered, sexual, and even erotic. She has said, in "Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine,"

The imperfect matches between gender and desire, sex and gender, and the body and technology can be accommodated within the automated cyborg, because it is always partial, part machine and part human...⁸⁸

In other words, sex and gender can be imperfectly matched in the body of the cyborg because it is a hybrid. I believe it is even more useful to think of the cyborg, not as *imperfectly* gendered, but gendered as *other*. This means that the cyborg can be imagined, not just as male or female, but as a third, *other* sex.

Our current ideas about sexual dimorphism started with Darwin who believed, from his research with animals, that all sexual activity is reproductive. His theory of sexual dimorphism, two sexes, male and female, with their only purpose to reproduce, was

⁸⁸Judith Halberstam, "Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine," Feminist Studies 17.3 (Fall 1991): 451.

soon taken to be scientific fact.⁸⁹ Most scientists and lay people alike, thanks to Darwin, believe/d that sex was a matter of biology and nature with only two distinct possibilities, male or female. In modern medical and scientific practice, four distinct attributes are used to decide a person's sex. These categories are "chromosomal sex; gonadal sex; morphological sex and related secondary sex traits; and psychosocial sex or gender identity."⁹⁰ Basically, the categories are anatomy, genes, and gender, though the most readily obvious indication is the appearance of the physical genitals, which usually governs sex assignment at birth.⁹¹

In Western thought we are prone to divide sex (and the world) into two opposing categories, male versus female, black versus white, good versus evil. Gilbert Herdt in Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History goes so far as to ask, "Is sexual dimorphism inevitable in *human* affairs?"⁹²

[emphasis added] Perhaps it is only *humans* that face this problem, as scientists have discovered frogs, fish and other life forms that do not fall into one of our two sex/gender categories. When discussing a non-human, a cyborg, perhaps we should consider

⁸⁹Gilbert Herdt, "Introduction: Third Sexes and Third Genders," Third Sex Third Gender: Beyond Sexual Dimorphism in Culture and History, ed. Gilbert Herdt (New York: Zone Books, 1994) 28.

⁹⁰Herdt 30-31.

⁹¹William M. Schuyler, Jr., "Sexes, Genders and Discrimination," Erotic Universe: Sexuality and Fantastic Literature, ed. Donald Palumbo (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986) 46.

⁹²Herdt 11.

something outside of sexual dimorphism, or a third possibility.

Since the cyborg body is entirely constructed within our imagery, looking at our portrayal of its sex/gender leads to illumination of our own thoughts on the same subjects. Jennifer Gonzalez has written in "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research,"

Visual representations of cyborgs are thus not only utopian or dystopian prophecies, but rather reflections of a *contemporary state of being*. The image of the cyborg body functions as a site of condensation and displacement. It contains on its surface and in its fundamental structure the multiple fears and desires of a culture caught in the process of transformation.⁹³ [emphasis added]

Her phrase "a contemporary state of being" is very important. This means that in the animated cyborg, we can see the contemporary fears and desires of the culture of its creation, Japan. The cyborg body as a "site of condensation and displacement" means that the cyborg brings together and at the same time separates, displaces, the sex and gender of its body. Because the cyborg is not either choice (male or female), it becomes always the cyborg-other.

Anne Hudson Jones has said in "The Cyborg (R)Evolution in Science Fiction," "[these North American science fiction stories]

⁹³Jennifer Gonzalez, "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies: Notes from Current Research," The Cyborg Handbook, ed. Chris Hables Gray (New York: Routledge, 1995) 267.

show the cyborg as a being so radically altered as to be (almost) a new species."⁹⁴ If the cyborg is a new species, it is not difficult to say that perhaps it also has a new gender, one we have not considered before, one unique to the hybridity of the cyborg. Judith Halberstam has said, "Gender emerges within the cyborg as no longer a binary but as a multiple construction dependent upon random formations beyond masculine or feminine."⁹⁵ The cyborg's gender is dependent upon "random formations," not upon the binary formation we use to create the divide of male and female. The cyborg body is not binary because it has already united the most basic binary divisions. It is not binary because it may contain differing sex/gender markers--an outward appearance that is female with the sexuality of a "male," for example. The cyborg body displays an ambiguous gender, an *other* gender beyond the male/female binary.

Some scholars have said that the cyborg exhibits "bisexual desires," could perhaps even be called a bisexual. This is not Freud's idea of bisexuality--the inability to identify fully with either sex--nor is it bisexuality as an identity, as we know it through identity politics. It is instead "bisexual desires, that is, nonsingular desires that may be detached from strict sex and/or gender oppositions."⁹⁶ The cyborg's gender and sex have already crossed over the standard binary divisions. Therefore, the

⁹⁴Jones 203.

⁹⁵Halberstam 456.

⁹⁶Pramaggiore 276.

cyborg's desires and sexual choices must also cross the binary divisions. Maria Pramaggiore has said,

Reading bisexually recognizes that culturally imposed binary sex and gender differences do not guarantee the 'proper' channeling of ego- or object-driven desire for characters or spectators: any character is a potential ego-ideal as well as a sexual object for other characters and for spectators.⁹⁷

The cyborg has no culturally imposed sex or gender differences. Therefore it has no "proper" ego-ideal or object choices. Hence it has the *ability* to desire any other character, as ego-ideal or object choice. This makes the cyborg distinctly bisexual, or perhaps omni-sexual, desiring all or any.

The cyborg is often the site of a joining of the sexes in much the same way that technology and humanness have been joined in their bodies. Jennifer Gonzalez has said in "Envisioning Cyborg Bodies,"

Whether the cyborg is bisexual or not, it certainly has attributes of both human sexes... Although the body overall has a masculine feel of weight and muscular bulk, this is clearly not a single-sex being. It storms across several thresholds; that between male and female, life and death, human and beast, organic and inorganic, individual and

⁹⁷Pramaggiore 282.

collective.⁹⁸

The cyborg is "clearly not a single-sex being." As not a single sex being, it must be multi-sexed, more than one or two sexes. Gonzalez states that the cyborg "represents that which cannot otherwise be represented."⁹⁹ One of the things which cannot currently be represented is a third sex, a third gender, an ambiguity--at least ambiguous from our dichotomous point of view. The (mostly) fictional cyborg body allows for innovations and ambiguities in our understanding of our (mostly) real human bodies.

Part IV: The Race Boundary

Few critics deal with the implications of a wider cyborg mythology and even fewer interrogate it using a racial analysis. Haraway suggests that the cyborg ontology be used for political empowerment of women as well as other disadvantaged groups. As Abby Wilkerson in her article "Ending at the Skin: Sexuality and Race in Feminist Theorizing" has said, "By shaking up boundaries and categories thought to be inscribed in nature, the cyborg also challenges the familiar values that marginalize and restrict various social groups."¹⁰⁰ This is the most obvious use of the

⁹⁸Gonzalez 274. When Gonzalez suggests that the cyborg body is usually "masculine" in feel, she refers to North American images of the cyborg. In Japan the cyborg body is often figured as explicitly "feminine" in feel.

⁹⁹Gonzalez 268.

¹⁰⁰Wilkerson 164.

cyborg metaphor and one which Haraway herself seems to have desired. Yet Haraway has little to say on the matter of race for the cyborg, a silence that perpetuates the marginalization and restriction of various social groups.

I believe that not only is the cyborg gendered as *other* but is also raced as *other*. Abby Wilkerson has mentioned this, "At a certain level, the cyborg can be read as an evasion of race, and of whiteness in particular..."¹⁰¹ I believe the cyborg can not only express an evasion of race, but also can express a combination of races. The cyborg seems to be multi-racial, a combination of several races, since it has crossed all binary divisions already, including black and white.

These concepts of evasion and combination of races are best typified in Japanese *anime* and *manga*. *Anime* and *manga* characters have a racially "white" look to them, yet they speak, act, and gesture as Japanese. Kenji Sato has said that the characters in *anime* are "'de-Japanized Japanese'--a blend of Japanese and Caucasian characteristics."¹⁰² He refers to characters in Neon Genesis Evangelion, a cyborg *anime* that I will be analyzing later, as embodying this Caucasian-Japanese mix.

Evangelion features a Japanese girl, Rei, and a girl who is one-quarter German and three quarters Japanese, named Asuka. But apart from Asuka's obviously Caucasian attributes of

¹⁰¹Wilkerson 170.

¹⁰²Kenji Sato, "More Animated than Life: A Critical Overview of Japanese Animated Films," Japan Echo Dec. 1997: 51.

light brown hair and blue eyes, there are no significant differences in the two girls' facial features or physiques. One should also note that Rei has blue hair and red eyes, rather remarkable traits for a Japanese girl!¹⁰³

Non-Japanese tend at first to think the animated characters are Caucasian, while Japanese people usually consider them Japanese, ignoring their frequent blond hair and blue eyes (or even their blue hair and blond eyes).

If we consider the cyborg a new species, it is not difficult to believe that it has a new race. The cyborg can be seen as embodying a combination of races, as in the example from *anime*, a combination of Japanese and Caucasian. This is what I mean by the idea of the cyborg as multi-racial. The cyborg can also be seen as embodying an absence of race. How can the cyborg have any race since it is created and manufactured?

The fact that very few theorists have dealt with the issue of the cyborg's race is an indication of how desperately we need to address it. I believe that the Japanese animated cyborg explores this race issue in ways that are innovative and useful for postmodern cyborg culture in general. As Sato says,

Only *anime*--and its cousin *manga*--can convincingly meld Japanese and Caucasian attributes into a natural-looking human being. This is because the upside of these genres' inherent lack of realism is their unique ability to exploit

¹⁰³Sato 51-52.

the appeal and fascination of the unreal.¹⁰⁴

It is only in *anime* and *manga* that these issues of race and gender can be explored to this extent. The lack of strict realism in *anime* contributes to its ability to plausibly portray our not too distant future, where the cyborg and all its implications will become very useful. An analysis of cyborg *anime* will bring insight into discussions of race and gender by allowing a more radical and complete vision of the cyborg and hence of ourselves.

Chapter Five:

Analysis

[T]he collapse of clear boundaries between humans and machines [is] part of the same postmodern move toward uncertainty that characterizes the collapse of difference between genders.¹⁰⁵

The films I will be analyzing are Neon Genesis Evangelion (Anno, 1995-96), Battle Angel (Fukutomi, 1993), AD Police Files (Ikegami, 1990), Bubblegum Crisis (Akiyama, 1987), and Ghost in the Shell (Shirow, 1995). The film Ghost in the Shell creates a new type of sex/gender in its main character, a cyborg who is

¹⁰⁴Sato 52.

¹⁰⁵Jean Baudrillard, Xerox and Infinity, trans. Agitac (Paris: Touchepas, 1988) 16. As quoted in Springer, Electronic Eros 67.

collapsing the boundaries between humans and machines and male and female. Its emphasis is on cyborg reproduction. Neon Genesis Evangelion (hereafter Evangelion) and Battle Angel are also collapsing the boundaries between male and female. Evangelion, concerned with Oedipal relationships, creates a neutral gender in its cyborgs. Battle Angel, paradoxically through its use of stereotypical femininity, also creates a neutral cyborg-gender, as I will explain more fully later.

There are other animated films that deal with human-machine interactions, many of which use mechanical, robot-like fighting suits, called *mecha* in Japanese. The *mecha* suits allow the human pilots or controllers to remove themselves from the robot body after the fighting is over. (See, for example, Robotech and Gundam Wing.) This creates quite a different psychological drama from the mechanical interaction that is permanent, and non--or not easily--removable, like the cyborg. I will include examples from the *mecha* genre when necessary, as its issues are extremely interesting and pertinent to the cyborg as well.

I will begin my analysis with a film that is not, technically, animated, but which arguably is one of the most important explorations of the human/machine interface in 1990s Japanese popular culture: Tetsuo, the Iron Man (Tsukamoto, 1992). Filmed in grainy black and white, Tetsuo uses live actors and stop-action filming techniques to create an animated quality. It also treats the issues of technology and sex in very interesting ways. The main character, Tetsuo, begins the film by inserting a large piece of metal in his thigh, joining himself with technology.

There is an image of maggots in the metal bar, an image of the impurity of technology. Memories in this film are seen through a TV screen, as though our brains have been replaced with technology, computer memory. Slowly Tetsuo becomes more and more merged with unidentifiable machinic technology. His body basically turns into metal, with metal objects attaching themselves to him as though there were a magnetic attraction. Tetsuo quickly becomes a metal-merged man, an Iron Man, as the title implies. He eventually meets a fellow cyborg, Rust Man, who decomposes everything he touches. By the end of the movie, they are joined together in one big ball of metal and human, crawling off into the sunset.

The most interesting part of this movie is Tetsuo's relationship to his girlfriend. After his transformation to an Iron Man, she becomes a sort of mechanical vixen. Her body grows a giant penis which is mechanical and animal-like at the same time. As she penetrates Tetsuo from behind, he tries in turn to penetrate her with his penis, which has become a giant drill bit. He succeeds and she dies from the effects of this penetration. Tetsuo as the cyborg, merged with technology in the most basic way, becomes unable to interact with his previous object choice, his girlfriend. In penetrating his girlfriend with the drill bit penis, Tetsuo is trying to retain his human masculinity while being a cyborg, but this is obviously not possible. By the end of the movie, Tetsuo has chosen a new friend and fellow cyborg, Rust Man, rather than his "natural" object choice, his girlfriend. Rust Man and Tetsuo merge together to take over the world.

Tetsuo's and Rust Man's mergers with masculine technologies,

metal objects in their physical bodies, create the appearance of hyper-masculine cyborgs.¹⁰⁶ For example, both Tetsuo and Rust Man are violent, unable to interact with others, and have a burning desire to forcibly take over the world. The two hyper-masculine cyborgs physically meld together, in the final scene, to begin their world domination. But these hyper-masculine cyborgs have problems that do not exist in the North American versions of the hyper-masculine cyborg, for example, in Terminator and Robocop, whose cyborgs were or could be good fathers and husbands. Tetsuo fails at having a sexual relationship with his girlfriend. The Rust Man fails at having normal human interactions. It is only in their joining together (hyper-masculine plus hyper-masculine) that they survive. The hyper-masculine (cyborg) is subverted by the (presence of another) cyborg to become a cyborg-other, a hybrid cyborg. My analysis is that the cyborg, while making Tetsuo and Rust Man individually masculine, in the end makes them the cyborg-other, as seen in their final united, hybrid cyborg. Unlike other examples of the cyborg that express a "natural" hybridity, it is only in their unification with each other, fellow cyborgs, that they are able to create the cyborg-other. Cyborg plus cyborg equals the cyborg-other, the hybridized, neutralized cyborg.

While this film requires in-depth analysis, for the purposes of this essay I merely want to state that it presents Japan's fears about technology and sex. At the moment of a sexual relationship,

¹⁰⁶Tetsuo, in a sense, has also been "feminized" by being penetrated from behind by his girlfriend. This "feminization" also contributes to his inability to control his bodily transformations and his hybrid cyborg subjectivity.

technological mayhem erupts, destroying the feminine and transforming the masculine. The masculine-masculine combination, as in the final scene of Tetsuo and the Rust Man together, negates its own masculinity and becomes neutralized. The last scene of Tetsuo and the Rust Man, stuck together as one unit, leads to this conclusion of a "neutralized" masculinity, a hybrid cyborg-gender. The feminine in this film takes on some masculine qualities, for example, in the scene where the girlfriend is trying to penetrate Tetsuo; and conversely the masculine cyborg, Tetsuo, becomes the berserk, hysterical feminine penetrating in complete panic the masculinized woman, and thereby destroying her. As Sharalyn Orbaugh states, "Control of the body is... clearly a nexus of hope and anxiety being played out through... cyborg narratives."¹⁰⁷ Tetsuo's radical masculinization, literally screwing his girlfriend to death, is a sign of the depth of anxieties felt over the threat of masculinity becoming feminized. And yet, it is only in the final combination of two masculine cyborgs that Tetsuo and the Rust Man survive. They create a true hybrid cyborg, a cyborg-other. The machine-human combination plays out the anxieties of masculinity in unexpected ways.

Part I: Neon Genesis Evangelion

One of the most interesting cyborg *anime* is Neon Genesis Evangelion (Shin Seiki Evangelion) by Anno Hideaki and Gainax

¹⁰⁷Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Sex and the Single Cyborg," Stanford University, 27 May 1999: 16.

Studios. As a television show, with 26 episodes, running from October 1995 to March 1996, and two movies, it was a huge success. Whole families watched the show together; it was not only created for young people. Evangelion has an extremely complicated plot involving Jewish cabalistic mysticism, cyberpunk apocalypses, Oedipal complexes, transnational corporate conspiracy, and the usual cute girls and big robots, so a short synopsis will not do it justice. However, there are some essential plot elements that must be explained.

The series begins in the year 2015, fifteen years after "Second Impact" which caused polar ice caps to melt, flooded major cities, and killed millions of people. Official sources report that "Second Impact" was caused by a meteor, but the true reason is that something called an "angel" attacked earth. In Japanese "angel" is rendered as *shito* which means apostle or prophet. (It is always translated in English as "angel" at the director's insistence.) This "angel" was destroyed and in the process caused "Second Impact." Now, fifteen years later new angels have appeared and are attacking the world.

The angels are unknown alien creatures that come in every shape, size and format, from giant monsters to bacteria viruses to metal rings. Normal weapons are useless against their powerful AT (Absolute Terror) Fields. The only weapons that have any remote chance of destroying the angels are huge *mecha*-suit, robot-creatures, called Eva, which have been created from genetic material of the original angel that caused "Second Impact." The Evas are not like the usual *mecha*-suit robots. They are partially

organic (and quite alien and monstrous, as well). They have a certain personality component, revealed slowly throughout the series. For reasons never fully explained, they must be piloted by fourteen year old children. The children must also have a high degree of synchronization with their Eva for it to function. This synchronization leads to the children feeling the Eva's pain, as well as their own personal fears, when confronting these bizarre otherworldly attacks. This is in contrast to the earlier *mecha-suit* shows, where the armored robot body completely protected the pilot or controller inside, who sometimes even controlled the robot from an safe exterior distance. At the beginning of the series, there are only two Evas in existence, prototype model Eva 00, piloted by Ayanami Rei, and test version Eva 01 which is piloted by their creator's son Ikari Shinji.

An interesting aspect of this series is the psychological dramas that the pilots and the other characters experience. The main protagonist is fourteen year old Ikari Shinji, the son of Commander Ikari Gendo, head of the special division, NERV, which created the Evas and researches and fights the attacking angels. Shinji's mother has died many years earlier under mysterious circumstances. It has been rumored that his father killed her. Throughout the series we slowly learn that her consciousness, and possibly some biological matter as well, was implanted in Eva 01 which Shinji pilots. Shinji, in one episode, synchronizes with his Eva so well that his physical body disappears. He spends that time in another dimension, communing with his mother. Shinji, in a twist on the normal Oedipal tale, actually gets to consummate his

desires for union with his mother by merging with her in the Eva.

Shinji feels abandoned by his father. Commander Ikari had left Shinji many years before to run NERV and only calls on him at the beginning of the series because Shinji is needed as a pilot, not because of any type of personal affection. Shinji cites his relationship with his father as one of the reasons he pilots an Eva; he is looking for personal affection from his father. At the same time he also states that he hates his father, suggesting a classic Oedipal complex. In fact, most of the major characters in the show, including the lead scientist, a woman named Ritsuko, and the Director of Operations, a woman named Misato, have issues with abandonment, parental loss, and Oedipal desires. Issues of abandonment, betrayal and loss speak to many fourteen year olds, the show's primary audience, as well as many adults. Shinji's psychological complex causes him to feel unwanted, self-conscious, and unworthy.

Rei, the pilot for the first prototype model, is quiet, stoic, and mysterious, in sharp contrast to Shinji's panicky self-loathing and the third pilot's over-confident brashness. Rei has no personal records or files. This is explained, towards the end of the series, when we discover that she is actually a genetic hybrid of Shinji's mother and the first angel. In fact, there is a whole room full of cloned Reis. If something happens to her, she will be replaced by another body/consciousness that calls itself Ayanami Rei. Her knowledge of this leads her to many bizarre, introspective, contemplative thoughts. When we first see her, and at many other points in the series, she is wounded from a previous

battle and is bleeding. This bleeding has an interesting effect on Shinji, as I will discuss later.

The last pilot is Asuka Langley, a red-haired German girl with an aggressive, bossy, brash personality. She admits that she pilots an Eva primarily for the recognition and praise from others. This she lacked in her home life because her mother went crazy, mistook a doll for her daughter, and then committed suicide. It is hinted that her mother's consciousness is also embodied in the Eva she pilots, Eva 02. Towards the end of the series, Asuka loses her synchronization with her Eva and becomes unable to pilot it.

Asuka, Shinji, and Misato, the Director of Operations, all live together in Misato's apartment, with Misato's pet Emperor penguin. This living arrangement creates some embarrassing, as well as growth-inducing, sexual tensions between Asuka and Shinji, though their pairing has more hints of a sibling rivalry than a sexual partnership. At the end of the movie, however, when the world has been destroyed, Asuka and Shinji are the only human survivors, sort of a neo-Adam and Eve.¹⁰⁸

There is one aspect of the Eva construction worth mentioning here. It is the entry plug, inserted into the Eva with a pilot inside. The entry plug is a phallic shaped cylinder that slides into the waiting orifice of the giant Eva. Once it has been inserted, the Eva releases an oxygenated fluid, reminiscent of

¹⁰⁸The TV series and the two movies made after it end quite differently. The series ends with something called the "Human Instrumentality Project," which creates a collect "hive" mind between all the characters, succeeding. The movies show the destruction of the world and conclude with Shinji and Asuka being the only survivors because they were in their Evas at the time of the destruction.

womb-like comforts, which fills the pilot's body. This means that piloting an Eva requires an incorporation of the entry plug/pilot into the Eva and the incorporation of the Eva's embryonic fluid into the body of the pilot. Orbaugh has called this process "INTERcorporation." She states, "each of the cyborg's two components--the mechanical Eva and the biotic Shinji--has penetrated into and filled the other; each has been incorporated by the other."¹⁰⁹ In being incorporated by the other, the Eva permeates Shinji's, and the other pilots', personal borders, just as Shinji penetrates the Eva. His first experience in an Eva is terrifying because of his loss of personal autonomy, threatening the loss of his subjectivity.

By having part of the machine inside of his body, as a woman has the penis inside her body during heterosexual intercourse, Shinji becomes feminized. Yet he is also penetrating the machine with himself as phallic entry plug, hence a masculinization. Overall, these balance each other creating in the cyborg amalgam of Shinji-Eva a neutral hybrid between masculinity and femininity.¹¹⁰

From another view point, the sci-fi cyborg is a complexly hermaphroditic creature whose impenetrable, dynamic, machinic

¹⁰⁹Orbaugh 13.

¹¹⁰Personally I do not believe in inherent, essential traits that mark masculinity and femininity, and somehow go naturally with male and female bodies. But I am doing a semiotic reading of the way these characters are gendered in socially stereotypical terms by the makers of the show. Still, even though they are using gender stereotypes, the ultimate message is one that transcends stereotypes and promotes a more hybrid view of the possibilities of gender.

components are masculinized and force completion on the pliable, yielding flesh of a feminized and partial materiality.¹¹¹

The masculine machinic components of the Eva are combined with the pliable, yielding "feminine" components of the human pilots to produce a "complexly hermaphroditic creature," the cyborg. Shinji's "feminization," the constant merging with his mother's consciousness and being penetrated by the cyborg, against the background of his natural masculinity and the Eva's masculine mechanical components, creates a neutralization of the Shinji-Eva cyborg gender.¹¹²

As Orbaugh says, this process of merging between the Eva's mechanical component and the biotic human exhibits "the INTERcorporation and interpenetration of two relatively equal components, to produce a third, hybrid product: the cyborg."¹¹³ Shinji in his intercorporation with his cyborg Eva loses his inherent human masculinity, is feminized and becomes a gender-

¹¹¹Robyn Clough, "Sexed Cyborgs?" Social Alternatives 16.31 (Jan. 1997): 2.

¹¹²Though we know that the Eva is partially made up of a woman's consciousness, its visual image is strikingly masculine. For example, it is heavily armored, robot-like, bestial and at least five stories tall. This visual image suggests masculinity, in contrast to the covert knowledge that it was created with a woman's body/consciousness. It is only toward the very end of the 26-part series that we actually find out about the Eva's true nature--incorporating part of Shinji's mother. For the majority of the series our image of it is "masculine," because of its appearance and because it is machinic/technological.

¹¹³Orbaugh 14.

neutral, hybrid cyborg. It is through this neutralization that the cyborg is able to defeat the forces of evil. I believe that the Shinji-Eva cyborg is erupting with *both* masculine and feminine characteristics. Shinji's masculine component is the mechanical, fighting Eva, as well as his natural human sex. (The fact that the Eva is partially female illustrates how the cyborg combines and confuses genders to create the cyborg-other. Even within individual components hybridization has occurred.) Shinji must "fight like a man" while merged with his mechanical, masculine Eva, even though he is extremely scared, a thought reinforced by his constant mantra of "I must not run away." Through his feminine merging, his intercorporation with the cyborg, and his masculine fighting, the Shinji-Eva combination becomes a true cyborg, with a hybrid, neutralized cyborg gender.

Shinji first pilots an Eva after seeing a wounded Rei's blood on his hands. Before this he has refused adamantly. But the sight of feminine blood forces him to pilot the Eva, even though he is scared, self-conscious, and feels incompetent. Blood is a frequent image around Shinji and the other pilots as well. During his first battle, after seeing Rei's blood and agreeing to pilot the Eva, he is badly beaten by the attacking angel. The view in this scene is from the control room where contact can no longer be established with Shinji inside the partially destroyed Eva. It is feared that he is dead. Blood has gushed out of the Eva's head and it no longer has any power. Yet, miraculously, the Shinji-Eva cyborg goes berserk, destroying the angel. Freudian hysteria, a "feminine" trait, leads to bloody cyborg berserking and is what

saves the day in the end.

Blood images are incorporated in many different episodes throughout the series. Shinji mentions one time that he thinks the entry plug smells like blood. In the same episode, he is also trapped in a giant ball of blood that is part of the body of an angel. The Shinji-Eva cyborg also becomes hysterical during a different episode, breaks free from the restraints that masquerade as the Eva's armor, and becomes the uncontrollable feminine. These uncontrollable and bleeding feminine images contribute to Shinji's cyborg neutralization.

The other original pilot, Rei, is pictured most frequently as injured, bandaged, and bleeding. Her room is full of tissues and bandages, lying crumpled and strewn over everything. One day Shinji kindly cleans up these bandages while waiting for Rei to come home. She returns and is quite embarrassed to have these feminine, bloody, messy symbols cleaned up by the male Shinji. Again blood becomes a neutralizing agent for Shinji. Shinji, the boy, is doing a typically "feminine" job of cleaning a room, and is hence "neutralized" by Rei's blood. By the end of the series, the room full of replacement cloned Reis is destroyed and the bodies, identical visions of Rei, crumble and dissolve in their murky-colored liquid, like blood in water.

The blood imagery continues with other characters as well. The third pilot, Asuka, with her long, bouncy red hair, symbolizes blood, instead of being in actual contact with it. She pilots the red colored Eva and her entry suit is red. Her personality could be considered red as well: brash, loud, angry, and fiery. She is

the pilot who voluntarily dives into red hot liquid magma to fight an angel. Asuka is always symbolizing blood, even if she is never personally injured or bleeding, unlike Shinji's Eva and Rei herself.

This contact with blood between the pilots and their Evas leads me to an interesting equation. Shinji, as a boy, does not bleed, yet he touches blood and his Eva bleeds. The combination of Shinji (male) and his mother/Eva (female) equals a cyborg neutral. Hence Shinji-Eva is the most powerful cyborg of the three. Throughout the series Shinji is portrayed as the best pilot. I would argue that this is because of his ability to be gender-neutralized and become the cyborg-other. He is in contact with blood more frequently, in the Eva and outside of it. Asuka herself does not bleed or have any actual contact with blood. The combination of Asuka (female) and her mother/Eva (female) creates an Asuka-Eva cyborg that cannot fully neutralize its gender. Hence, this lack of direct contact with blood and inability to completely neutralize the gender contributes to Asuka in the end being unable to pilot her Eva. She cannot become fully neutralized by the blood symbols, and therefore cannot synchronize with her Eva. The combination of Rei (a clone who is not fully human) and her Eva (of unknown gender characteristics) equals a strange hybrid. The Rei-Eva cyborg is slightly more successful than the Asuka-Eva cyborg. I believe it is because Rei herself bleeds. Rei, because of her bloody wounds, is frequently in contact with feminized blood. Rei is the second best pilot; her consciousness is used for the "dummy plug," a program that allows an Eva to

operate without a pilot. The "dummy plug," the Rei consciousness, makes an Eva think that a pilot is inside. Rei's talents are great but she is an average pilot. This is because she has contact with blood but is not neutralized by it. But thanks to Shinji's natural masculinity, he is more perfectly neutralized by the feminine cyborg and blood images and hence the better pilot and hero of the show.

Shinji frequently has his most intense battle experiences when he becomes hysterical, an uncontrollable, (Freudian) feminine trait.

As the imagined social body becomes more and more perfectly controlled--more and more closely fitting the model of (male) autonomous subjectivity--the likelihood of the eruption of the repressed body, in all its abject, excessive, imperfect, uncontrolled, female-ness increases.¹¹⁴

The return of the repressed body, in this case the eruption of uncontrolled femininity, contrasts with Shinji's masculinity and forms a cyborg-other. The fact that the Evas are modern, scientific, research experiments, albeit created in hopes of saving the world, suggests how "perfectly controlled" they are. For example, the Evas are on a leash-like, umbilical cord power supply, without which they only have five minutes of power. The Evas also have plate-like armor which we discover is actually a set of restraints. The eruption of the feminine, in the sight of blood,

¹¹⁴Orbaugh 16.

the symbols of blood, and the terror of hysteria, is more likely to happen in the Evas. I believe the feminine neutralizes the natural masculine, in Shinji for example, creating a necessary hybrid, neutral cyborg, i.e. the only way to win.¹¹⁵

The other pilots are similarly gendered neutral when merged with their Evas, though as I mentioned before this works to a greater and lesser extent with different pilots. Asuka, as a human girl, is masculinized by her merging with the Eva cyborgs.¹¹⁶ Asuka is quite loud, outgoing, and bossy, all typical masculine traits. Her competitiveness at fighting, and any other test, also characterizes her as masculine. Though she is possibly merging with her mother's consciousness in the Eva, Asuka is masculinized by her aggressive behavior. Her one female friend, a classmate, complains because Asuka just plays video games all day, a masculine pastime in Japan as well as the West. In contrast to her friend's romantic crush on another schoolmate, Asuka's sole desires revolve around demonstrating her capacity to pilot her Eva and fight well, a function of her masculinization. She does have a crush on the rugged, daring and handsome Kaji, Misato's former lover and a possible double agent. Her crush, which fades to the background

¹¹⁵Technically no one wins in this series thanks to the all-out apocalypse, but the Shinji-Eva cyborg is more frequently the winner of individual battles against the angels and more frequently saves the other cyborgs during battle.

¹¹⁶Asuka actually demonstrates "masculine" characteristics both in and out of the Eva. But, since we only see her after she has begun piloting an Eva, there is no way of distinguishing whether her masculinity came first or whether piloting the Eva contributed to it. I believe piloting the Eva contributed to her "masculinization."

pretty quickly, suggests a "normal" object choice for Asuka's gender. However, her real feminine body creates a balance against the masculinity of her aggressive fighting. In the Eva suit, Asuka (masculinized-female) combines with her (feminine) Eva and does not produce the fully neutral cyborg. Hence, by the end of the show, she is unable to control and pilot her Eva.

Rei is grown in the lab with genetic material from the Evas and the angels. As a clone, she is already a semi-human hybrid. Like cyborgs in general, her gender is less relevant, as it was obviously chosen and constructed. Her way of speaking, soft but very direct, and her strength and fearlessness on the battlefield contribute to an overall neutralization. Rei (slightly feminized human hybrid) in combination with her Eva (an unknown gender hybrid) creates a neutral gender state for the Rei-Eva cyborg. Rei is "feminized" by her contact with blood, her own especially. She embodies the messy, bleeding feminine body. This "feminization" combined with her masculine stoicism creates a neutral, hybrid cyborg. When she merges with her Eva (another semi-human hybrid) Rei, as a semi-human hybrid, creates a hybrid cyborg, a neutral cyborg-other.

The point I want to make about the Eva pilots is that their sexuality becomes neutralized into a hybrid cyborg state by their combination with their Evas. Shinji, as a male, completes this process more effectively than the others. As a male, merging with his mother's consciousness in his Eva, his masculinity is merging with the Eva's femininity to create a third neutral, hybrid sex/gender for the Shinji-Eva cyborg. Rei, in merging with her

Eva, also creates a hybrid gender. She is "neutralized" by her Eva, fighting without regard for her "original" gender, her "appropriate" gender roles, or her personal feelings. As a clone, she has no "real" gender and her combination with the Eva leads to no "real" gender. It leads instead to the cyborg hybrid *other* gender. Asuka, in merging with her Eva, tries to create a new gender. She becomes neutralized by her mother's consciousness, a feminine symbol within her Eva, in contrast to her own brash, self-confident masculine traits. Yet her physical body's female gender prohibits her from becoming truly neutralized by the Eva. The female-female combination of Asuka-Eva cannot be neutralized as fully as the Shinji-Eva and the Rei-Eva cyborgs.

"Gender is what crucially defines us, so that an ungendered subject cannot, in this view, be human."¹¹⁷ An ungendered subject, such as the neutral gendered cyborg, is not human and cannot live, breed, and die by the same gender standards that humans use. This means that an ungendered, non-human subject can exist outside of our petty boundaries, our established dichotomies, and our "necessary" gender divisions. The Evangeliion cyborgs illustrate this ungendered cyborg's hybridity, the hybridity that Haraway has theorized. The Shinji-Eva cyborg, as the most ungendered cyborg, is the most successful. The other pilot-Eva cyborg combinations are not as successful at neutralizing their gender and therefore not as successful as cyborgs. Neon Genesis Evangelion does not

¹¹⁷Annette Kuhn, The Power of the Image: Essays (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985) 52-53. As quoted in Chris Straayer, Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies: Sexual Re-Orientations in Film and Video (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996) 69.

provide a finished narrative, with a utopic vision of a better future peopled by gender-neutral cyborgs. Nonetheless, I believe that much of the show's importance and appeal can be traced to its experiments with the possibilities of the gender-neutral cyborg.

Though the pilots in Evangelion can remove themselves from the neutralized cyborg combination, the question remains whether they have truly separated themselves from it. This is one of the pressing questions in cyborg narratives. Can the two pieces, the Eva and the pilot, be separated after being joined in this kind of intercorporation process? Where does the human begin and the mechanical stop, or the self and the other? Freud's theory that anatomy is destiny creates interesting new questions with the cyborg. What does this mean for the cyborg body, constructed, manufactured, and controlled? Marshall McLuhan has said, "Physiologically, man in the normal use of technology (or his variously extended body) is perpetually modified by it and in turn finds ever new ways of modifying his technology."¹¹⁸ The Eva pilots modify the Eva technology, which in turn modifies them, noticeably in the areas of sexuality and gender. The pilots, merged together with their Evas, modify their own gender to become a gender-neutral cyborg, a cyborg-other.

Part II: Bubblegum Crisis/ AD Police Files

I would like to turn now to an *anime* where the cyborg figures are not the hero-protagonists but the bad guys. There are two

¹¹⁸McLuhan 46.

related animated TV series, Bubblegum Crisis and AD Police Files, which both feature *mecha*-suits and cyborg/androids. These shows are basically about four young women in color-coded *mecha*-suits fighting an evil giant corporation and its androids. The very generic idea of corporations controlling the world, the passing references to the movie Blade Runner, and the young women's technical superiority in the *mecha*-suits they own, easily make these shows a bit trite.

However, the interesting aspects of these shows revolve around the images of the android. While not technically cyborgs, the androids in these shows, called Boomers, are "artificial humans, made up of proteins, artificial intelligence and artificial organs."¹¹⁹ They are invariably portrayed as female, sexual and dangerous. The viewers only see these androids when something has gone wrong and they have gone viciously berserk. The police, or the Bubblegum Girls, are then called in to stop the hysterical, never-ending, (feminine) killing rampage that the Boomer has started. The Boomers' hysterical killing sprees frequently begin when, as sexually functional androids, they have sex with someone. Sexual activity floods their bodies with emotions that cause them to freak out, killing everyone in sight. In order to control the hysterical, feminine other, the police shoot at it. This leads to a lot of graphic shooting at half-naked women by the heroes, be they the police force or the Bubblegum girls.

¹¹⁹Androids differ from cyborgs in that they are completely artificial. Cyborgs are created from some original organic material combined with machinic parts. AD Police Files "File 1: The Phantom Woman", dir. Ikegami Takamasa, Artmic, Inc and Youmex, Inc., 1990. English subtitled version, AnimEigo, 1993.

The first scene of AD Police Files: Episode One, begins with a half-naked woman advancing towards a bloody man who is trying to shoot her. It seems as though they have just had a sexual encounter. She says, "I kill men who can't satisfy me." She is then shot by the injured man. The combination of sex and technology, especially as envisioned in the body of the female who can't be satisfied, is obviously a big fear for modern technological societies, including Japan.

These androids are, however, extremely hard to kill, as evidenced in the next scene of Episode One, where a police force has been called out to deal with a hysterical Boomer. Again after having sex, it/she started killing people. Wearing a slinky dress, bloody with the other men she has killed, the Boomer kills a very macho male member of the police force. His colleague, a woman named Geena, is so enraged she attacks the android herself. Geena rips open the android's breast with her bare hand until a milky white liquid gushes out. This extreme measure does not even kill the android. It is still necessary to spend five minutes shooting at the enraged android from every possible direction by what seems like a whole army of guns. Geena, the female police officer, is presented visually, in this first scene and throughout the episode, as very masculine. She has short hair, seems to be the only female member of the police force, and acts more macho than the new male rookie she takes under her wing. We see her wearing tank tops and army fatigues, well muscled, and a seasoned drinker. This is in sharp contrast to the hysterical Boomers who are usually wearing seductive lingerie or sexy feminine dresses.

Visually the image of a (masculine-coded) woman tearing at a (feminine-coded) woman's breast until it rips open in a stream of milk/blood-like fluid is disturbing and outrageous, not to mention personally dangerous for the police officer. Why the creators chose to have a woman do this dirty work is an interesting question. The cyborg/android as the hysterical feminine is only controlled by the relatively masculine, in this case the police force member ripping open the android's breast. I believe that it might have been too extreme to show a man doing the same thing Geena did. Or perhaps the same action by a man would be too close to hidden male desires. I would argue that Geena takes on the male gender, in this show, and expresses the male fears over techno-hybrid women.

These cyborg/androids are rendered as extremely female, serving (exclusively man's) sexual needs. This is not so unusual, though what is striking about them is their violent reactions to sex, the hysterical killing rampage they go on afterward, and the necessary graphic shooting spree required to stop them. A woman who is a machine, and hence "masculine" as well as functionally feminine, can only, in these shows, respond to men with extreme rage, going berserk, killing people. "She" is unable to function in the appropriate (feminine) way. These Boomers exhibit the cyborg's gender of other, which does not allow them to be either male or female but only a hybrid combination of both. As a hybrid cyborg, she kills men who don't satisfy her. As a cyborg-other, how can she be satisfied by human masculinity? This show exhibits a fear and panic about this kind of machine-human, functionally

feminine and masculine, combination.

Since these androids are technically the villains, it is not terribly surprising that they portray our fears rather than desires. However, the Boomers' original purpose as a "sex-bot" can be seen as a desire potentially shared by many in the social imaginary. Yet, instead of creating a femininity that can be controlled by its creators, the cyborg has brought about a hybrid sexuality that cannot be controlled. In fact, this hybrid sexuality is in a hysterical rage against its creators. The image of a woman combined with technology who cannot be sexually satisfied is terrifying, according to this series. There is some desire to be able to rip apart that cyborg-other and this series expresses it. Through the misogynistic visual images of women being graphically shot, we can see that this overpowering sexuality, that of the hybrid cyborg, is a serious fear for Japan and the rest of the world. These images of the "masculine" clawing open and shooting apart the body of the monstrous-feminine, here seen as the cyborg-other, establishes both fears and desires that Japan, and the rest of the world, may hold.

Part III: Battle Angel

Battle Angel has as its hero-protagonist a female cyborg, named Gally. This cyborg has been scavenged from junk pieces by its creator, a renegade cyborg doctor now working as a "hunter-warrior." The biggest piece, and perhaps the piece comprising the organic element that houses the natural personality of the cyborg,

is that of the head and shoulders which were discovered intact. The doctor does not know what kind of cyborg Gally was, but after he rebuilds her he begins to find out. He builds her a cute young girl body, which her voice matches. This *anime* is an obvious reminder that the cyborg's body is built by other people and has no relation to the true interior self--assuming that the cyborg can have a "true" self in relation to gender or sex or any other body functions that we as singular human subjects can understand.

One night Gally follows the doctor as he leaves for his real job as a mercenary hunter for the state, a "hunter-warrior." It is lucky that she does follow him because he is almost killed by the criminals he is pursuing. She rescues him and kills one of the criminals with her bare hands. Afterwards she says she did not know what her body was doing. She says she just got mad and then killed him. It is in the state of anger and rage that Gally is able to revert to her "true" identity as a highly-skilled cyborg warrior.

The first time, as well as the next time, Gally kills someone is after the sight of blood. During this second incident, her dog has been killed and though she shows no sadness for the dog, she wipes the blood under her eyes like war paint. It is then that she goes berserk and kills the cyborg criminal. It is after the sight of (feminine) blood that Gally is able to perform her (masculine) killings. In Battle Angel (feminine) blood leads to (masculine) killings which together equal a (neutral) cyborg. The combination of blood and killings contributes to Gally's overall cyborg neutralization.

Against her creator's wishes, Gally wants to become a "hunter-warrior." "Hunter-Warriors" are a sort of mercenary police force. They hunt cyborg criminals for posted rewards. It is a shock to him that she would want to do something like this, something so masculine and violent. The doctor tells her that he didn't build her body for that kind of thing, an obvious reference to her constructed and controlled cyborg body. He says to her, "I don't want you soiling your perfect hands with blood." The (feminine) blood that seems to cause her fighting power to burst out is what he wants to restrict. She responds with, "I'm not some doll for you to play with!" Yet as a created and controlled body, she is technically a doll for him.

Gally does manage to have her own uncontrolled life by falling in love with a young human boy, named Yugo. He is more concerned with leaving the trash heap they live in, called Scrap Iron City, and travelling to the city in the clouds, Zalem, than he is with her romantic interest. He works constantly at random jobs in order to save enough money to travel to Zalem. Tragically, it is not actually possible for the residents of Scrap Iron City to go to Zalem, unless it is as spare body parts. Not knowing about the actual inability to travel between the two places, Yugo begins killing people for extra money (their spinal cords fetch a high price) and he becomes an outlawed criminal. A fellow "hunter-warrior" kills Yugo for the bounty but Gally manages to save his life by diverting her own blood supply to him. He is then rebuilt by the good doctor as a cyborg.

It is not until he is rebuilt as a cyborg that he becomes

able to appreciate Gally's cyborg love. However, his true love is still Zalem, the city in the clouds. He rushes off to try and personally climb his way out of Scrap Iron City, refusing to believe that there is not an actual way to travel to Zalem. Gally follows him to the ends of the earth, literally the ends of the cables attaching the cloud city to the earth. It is there that she confesses her love to him. He thanks her for it and moments later plummets to his death. It is only as two cyborg bodies that their love can finally be achieved and appreciated. Yet, the ultimate cyborg love, cyborg-to-cyborg, is never consummated.

The main character of this *anime* is fascinating because she is extremely feminine as well as brutally masculine. Gally's femininity is that of a little girl, rather than a mature woman. This is in stark contrast to the only other female character in the story, the doctor's former wife, a sexually-mature, aggressive, and immoral woman. The doctor's former wife is tall with blond hair and blue eyes. She wants to return to the city in the clouds, Zalem, and is willing to do anything to get there, such as seduce her former husband, have sex with the boss of the criminal underworld, and even work on cyborg criminals so that they can fight with Gally. This shows her aggressiveness; she wants to compete with her former husband and his new toy, Gally. She is also sexually aggressive. She is trying to use her sexual relationship with the boss of the criminal underworld for passage back to Zalem. In the end she dies a horrible death, cut up into spare parts for shipment to Zalem, thanks to her unending demands to return there. Gally, on the other hand, is not aggressive,

sexually-mature or immoral. She is the only woman in the show who survives in the end. I believe this is because Gally's sexuality is more gender-neutral, more cyborg-ish, and less sexually-mature.

Gally's physical cyborg body is very petite and girlish. She speaks in a very feminine voice, yet easily rips apart hardened cyborg criminals. She uses the most feminine Japanese words, rather than more neutral, or even masculine, sounding ones. The image of her tiny feminine body performing these brutal tasks is quite striking. She easily moves between the two extremes of femininity and masculinity. As a cyborg, she is the only kind of creature that can balance such a dichotomy. Her balance comes from these two extremes being played against each other until they reach a neutral level, the cyborg level. Her love interest is similar. It is not until he too is of a cyborg-gender that he becomes able to reciprocate her love.

Part IV: Ghost in the Shell

This brief description of Ghost in the Shell will hopefully elucidate the arguments about the cyborg's gender that Haraway and others have discussed. The main character of the animated film Ghost in the Shell, Major Kusanagi Motoko, is a cybernetic officer, a cyborg, in an elite branch, Section 9, of an unspecified government. She has been heavily modified/(re)built by technological innovations in order to become an efficient and violent military weapon.

In our first glimpses of her, her gender is quite ambiguous.

With mid- to short length hair, a mid-range voice, not too masculine, not too feminine, and an unassuming trench coat, it is hard to tell whether she is a man or a woman. It is only when she takes the coat off to perform her brutal killing mission that we see her naked body, adorned with guns and equivalent with her lethal qualities. She is a beautifully fit, impossibly perfect adult female (cyborg.) The only remaining human element in her cyborg body is a glimmer of her "ghost," that indescribable bit of human consciousness that comes from her "real" organic brain. When she discovers that the possibility exists for computer programs to create an artificial "ghost," she begins to lose faith in her own uniqueness, her original and essential humanness. Her questions of self-identity pursue her throughout the film.

A computer-criminal master-mind called "The Puppet Master," who does not commit crimes himself, but instead "ghost-hacks" people, giving them false memories, families, and ideals, is also pursuing Kusanagi. His interest in Kusanagi culminates in a cyborg body, the same kind and almost the same "design" as hers, being suddenly and spontaneously produced at a cyborg manufacturing plant. It turns out the cyborg body is inhabited by the "ghost" of the Puppet Master. He has been purposefully lured, by a rival government section, into the mechanical body, in the hopes that his real body can be killed and he will be trapped. However, the Puppet Master, who comes to life in the "unplugged" cyborg body, states that he is an autonomous life form born on the net and immediately asks for political asylum.

In requesting political asylum, the Puppet Master rightly

questions the narrow definition of life as understood in our modern world. He says,

I submit that your DNA is nothing more than a self-preserving program itself. Man gains his individuality from the memories he carries. While memories may as well be the same as fantasy, it is by these memories that mankind exists. When computers made it possible to externalize memory you should have considered all the implications that held.¹²⁰

If memories are a human characteristic and define our distinction from machines, with computer memories the difference between human and machine is no longer so distinct. The Puppet Master is correct that there are many questions mankind has not yet considered in relation to computers, cyborgs, and technology. The questions raised by this autonomous life form cannot be dismissed; they strike at the heart of cyborg theory and more significantly, at the definition of "human."

Kusanagi's quest for self-identity is realized in her "merging" with the Puppet Master in the climax of the movie. The Puppet Master desires to have progeny and die. Organic life forms can do these things but he cannot. The "merger," which sounds ominously corporate, will create a new version of themselves, a merged hybrid version. The Puppet Master says, "We will both be

¹²⁰Ghost in the Shell dir. Oshii Mamoru, based on the comic book by Shirow Masamune, 1995. English subtitled version, Kodansha LTD, Bandai Visual Co., LTD, Manga Entertainment Inc., 1996.

slightly changed but neither will lose anything." The Puppet Master tells her that after the merger, she will bear an offspring onto the net and he will be able to die. Both will achieve a near-human like reality. At the climactic moment, the Puppet Master's cyborg body is destroyed. Kusanagi narrowly escapes, thanks to a cyborg colleague's timely rescue. He puts her brain (and the newly merged "ghost") into a new body, that of a young girl.

The climactic scene in Ghost in the Shell involves the protagonist "merging" with the Puppet Master. The "merging" actually takes place after Kusanagi's arms, legs and much of her torso have been destroyed in a fight to gain access to the equally destroyed body of the Puppet Master. Both of them are female, nude, upper torsos of mechanical, manufactured bodies. The bodies are almost mirror images of each other. This is even articulated at one point when the Major asks the Puppet Master why he chose to "merge" with her. His response was "Because in you I see myself. As a body sees its reflection within a mirror." With mirror images of the same body presented to us, the Puppet Master's "masculine" voice does not hide the genderlessness of "his" situation, as I will explain later.

With two female, mechanical torsos, the "merging" is presented very much like a sexual act. Their bodies are laid side by side. Though the bodies are not physically touching except for wires and electrodes, the intimacy of a sexual scene is there. For example, the view cuts between head and shoulder shots of the cyborgs, just as it does in similar bedroom scenes in other films. As the two cyborgs lie next to each other, Kusanagi's fellow cyborg

officer acts as voyeur in their private scene, as well as the facilitator. Without his help it would not be possible for Kusanagi and the Puppet Master to complete their merger, since it requires wires connecting them to each other and they both no longer have any limbs. Their scene becomes even more intimate when, not long after plugging into each other, the other officer, the outsider, can no longer hear them. The merger has become an act made for the two players only. They even occasionally turn their heads to look, longingly perhaps, at each other. In this way the scene mimics a sexual encounter even more.

This scene raises many questions which I mentioned at the beginning of this paper and which I will now answer. While their bodies are physically of the same sex, this scene cannot be read as a homosexual scene. Their bodies are manufactured. Nor, despite the Puppet Master's male voice, can it be read as a heterosexual scene. As one character from the Foreign Ministry explains earlier in the film in reference to the Puppet Master, "[the doctor is] referring to the original ghost block within the shell. Its sex remains undetermined, and the use of the term 'he' is merely a nickname the good doctor has given it." The cyborg's manufacturability also becomes more obvious during the final moments when we see our protagonist, her familiar body totally destroyed, in the new body of a young girl, the only thing her fellow agent could find quickly on the black market. The cyborg's ability to change bodies leaves us with the certainty that their sex/gender is not dependent on the body they inhabit.

The Puppet Master speaks in a masculine voice throughout the

film. The protagonist speaks in a comparatively feminine voice throughout the film. Is this an indication of their "true" sex/gender? Can the climactic scene be considered heterosexual because of this? The scene is couched in heterosexuality to divert from the, perhaps, abnormal visual presentation of two women in a romantic encounter, "merging." However, the Puppet Master himself has said that as an autonomous life form born on the net, "there never was a body." If there never was a body, how can there possibly be a sex or gender?

There are many instances where the sex and gender of the main character is not only questioned, but also questions our own preconceived theories about the male/female dichotomy in sexuality. As Gilbert Herdt discusses in his book, Third Sex, Third Gender, the possibilities for a third sex or gender, or many, outside the diad of male and female are great.

Of course, examples of alternate sex and gender categories are also known in which being of a *different nature*, that is neither male or female nor masculine or feminine, are also known...¹²¹ [emphasis added]

I would like to suggest that the cyborg body is the perfect example of a *different nature*. The main character of Ghost in the Shell may have female anatomy, but can it really be said to belong to her? It is more like a suit of clothes that could be changed at any time, as evidenced in the final body we see of the young girl.

¹²¹Herdt 63.

The choice of a pre-adolescent female body reminds us that Kusanagi's evident "sexuality" is completely arbitrary and illusory. Herdt has said,

Whatever the exigencies of one's body, especially the visible anatomy, we can ask: What social role does the person take, or what position do they claim: that of the first sex (male), second sex (female) or third sex (e.g., hermaphrodite)?¹²²

I would posit that the cyborg takes the third sex, or perhaps a fourth, a cyborg-gender, when we look at the "social role" the cyborg plays as Herdt suggests we should. The social role for a body that is manufactured cannot be dependent on its external gender characteristics. While it is possible for cyborgs to be manufactured with a specific social role or sexual intent--for example the "sex-bot"--as a cyborg, it will always be displaying its cyborg hybridity, rather than the gender role built for it. The cyborg's social role is as a hybrid.

Within modern scientific criteria, the cyborg Kusanagi is not male or female; she is of a different nature. Her body is mechanical and manufactured. Her chromosomes and hormones, if they exist at all in her futuristic mechanical body, are surely not her own. Her anatomy definitely portrays her as female, but again it has been constructed for her. Her brain, which is the only truly organic part, perhaps sees itself psychologically as female. However, we see no glimmers of this from her, though we do see her

¹²²Herdt 62.

fellow male officers feeling the appropriate gender embarrassment for her nakedness.¹²³ She cannot be said to be female, yet she cannot be said to be male. She is a combination and yet an absence. Thanks to Kusanagi we are left to design a new theory of the sexual world, a third, or fourth, possibility in a world of dichotomies.

In this text, Kusanagi's weight and strength is definitely superior to that of a man. One human officer even refers to her as an Amazon, female fighters known for their strength. Yet the depictions of her are extremely erotic. The gendered technology as expressed in Ghost in the Shell revolves around creating a bisexual, post-gender identity for the protagonist. Her sex and gender identity is so sexual it becomes a non-sexual identity, an absence as well as a total fulfillment, a neutralization. A hybrid body like Kusanagi's can span both sexes.

For this new cybernetic life form, sex and gender are completely irrelevant, as well as manufacturedly there. Cyborgs are extremely erotic, yet the erotic desire can never be fulfilled. "In cyberpunk the cyborg is at once a delibidinalized body and a sexualized machine."¹²⁴ Kusanagi and the Puppet Master exhibit this sexualized, erotized machine and the delibidinalized organic

¹²³Many times throughout the film, Kusanagi performs her duties (killing and capturing criminals) naked. In one instance, she stands naked with no embarrassment in front of the male criminal and her male colleague. Her colleague, feeling embarrassed or protective, covers her with a coat.

¹²⁴Scott Bukatman, Terminal Identity: The Virtual Subject in Postmodern Science Fiction (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993) 328.

body. In this way Ghost in the Shell portrays a vision of a unique gender that is neither male or female, and also both male and female. I believe the cyborg creates an erotic sexuality that can only be described as encompassing both sexes and neither sex at the same time. As one scholar has stated,

Contemporary critique through an engagement with cyborg discourse would suggest that within the monstrous-feminine lies a creature outside gendered positioning, outside abjection, within the cyberotic, which encapsulates the fluctuating fetishistic desires: neither male nor female, but cyborgian.¹²⁵

Cyborgs having sex with other cyborgs, regardless of their bodily gender, leaves only the option of a new, unique and fully postmodern gender, a cyborg-gender, that is the combination of both sexes, as well as the absence of all sexes, a neutrality.

Annalee Newitz has written in "Magical Girls and Atomic Bomb Sperm: Japanese Animation in America," "What these *anime* demonstrate is the way male and female bodies are largely indistinguishable once wedded to *mecha* technologies."¹²⁶ Cyborg bodies, already wedded to their technology, are indistinguishable

¹²⁵Barbara Kennedy, "Post-Feminist Futures in Film Noir," The Body's Perilous Pleasures: Dangerous Desires and Contemporary Culture, ed. Michele Aaron (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999) 139.

¹²⁶Annalee Newitz, "Magical Girls and Atomic Bomb Sperm: Japanese Animation in America," Film Quarterly Dec. 1995: 8.

by gender. The cyborg body as represented in Ghost in the Shell is the best combination of both sexes, strongly masculine in her machine-like capabilities and exquisitely feminine in her well-proportioned female body. In such a way, these gender-less bodies are also at the same time gender-full.

Chapter Six:

The Cyborg-Gender Conclusion

In this paper, I have been using a semiotic reading of gender codes to analyze several cyborg anime. *Anime*, as a popular culture artifact, is extremely popular, heavily consumed, both in Japan and more recently in the rest of the world. Marshall McLuhan has asked, "Are people really expected to internalize--live with--all this power and explosive violence, without processing and siphoning it off into some form of fantasy for compensation and balance?"¹²⁷ One site for processing the power and explosive violence of postmodern society for the purposes of "compensation and balance" is the animated cyborg.

Cultures allow for and create different modes and types of sexualities. These modes and types are revealed in popular culture artifacts.

Cultures, conceived of both as Foucault's disciplinary apparatuses and as constructive mechanisms, continually hem

¹²⁷McLuhan 219.

in and border our desires; enacting those desires produces institutional and psychological structures which are necessarily punctured by gaps through which 'other' modalities of sexuality can be apprehended and performed.¹²⁸

The animated cyborg is performing "other" modalities of sexuality. These other modalities are characterized by the cyborg's hybridity, its ability to overcome hierarchical dualities, including those of male and female, animal and machine. The international popularity of popular culture products featuring the animated cyborg reveals an interest--desiring or fearful--in hybridity.

The popular TV series, Neon Genesis Evangelion, delves into these issues of hybridity. Its cyborgs are combinations of human children and gigantic robot-like creatures called Evas. The series establishes an equation where the cyborg with the most neutralized, cyborg-like, sex/gender is the one who does the best. This is usually Shinji, the young male protagonist, who when merging with his Eva is actually combining with his mother's consciousness. This combination of male (Shinji) plus female (his mother's consciousness in his Eva) equals a neutral cyborg. It is only as a neutral cyborg that he can survive and occasionally save the day. The other characters work this equation with less positive results. Their abilities to become neutralized are not as strong and therefore, they do not do as well.

In the anime Battle Angel, the main character, a cute and petite cyborg, expresses her cyborg hybridity by doing a masculine

¹²⁸Pramaggiore "BI-ntroduction" 4.

job as a "hunter-warrior" at the same time as acting with extreme femininity. She looks like a young girl, speaks in a feminine voice, and kills huge, powerful, hardened cyborg criminals with little effort. She is in love with a young human man, but he does not reciprocate her love. It is only after he too has become a cyborg that he appreciates her cyborg love. However, as is the case with most cyborgs, their love is never consummated.

"In cyberpunk the cyborg is at once a delibidinalized body and a sexualized machine."¹²⁹ This is exactly what the cyborg body is in Ghost in the Shell. The main cyborg character spends most of the film naked and eroticized from the viewer's point of view. Yet, as a cyborg body, the protagonist Kusanagi is a manufactured machine, including only the parts designated as useful to her job. Kusanagi, while merging with another cyborg, is an eroticized, naked body and, at the same time, a delibinalized machine. Kusanagi, as a cyborg body, is never able to consummate her desires until her merger with another cyborg hybrid entity. This is similar to Tetsuo and the Rust Man's merger, in Tetsuo: the Iron Man, which allows them to become one gender-neutral cyborg entity. The cyborg in this film, Ghost in the Shell, is both sexual and non-sexual at the same time.

Throughout this paper I have examined some ideas behind the need and the existence of a third gender crashing through our system of dualisms. I believe this third gender to be typified by the cyborg body. Changeable, manufactured, and always a hybrid, the cyborg body has come to epitomize the thoughts, fears, and

¹²⁹Bukatman 328.

desires of our postmodern society. The fact that the cyborg exhibits characteristics of a third gender, a hybridization in all areas, merely confirms the suspicion that "merging" is in our own postmodern future. As we continue to use our science "fiction" to reflect and change our science "reality", we can also hopefully use this cyborg-gender to reflect and change our future gender. The cyborg as a hybrid can encourage us, in our fractured, hybridized times, to become (or accept ourselves as) cyborgs. Because of the cyborg's role, I can only hope and suggest that scholars continue to study this interesting image.

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