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Nippon ex Machina: Japanese Postwar Identity in Robot Anime and the Case of *UFO Robo Grendizer*

What seems like a radical contradiction—that a Japanese anime with giant robots as alien characters might represent *both* the totalitarian invaders *and* the good old American defenders of freedom and justice—is actually evident in more than one anime series of the 1970s. In this essay I will analyze Japanese postwar identity in the 1970s, especially as it emerged in the context of Japan's complex relationship with the United States, through anime dealing with adventure, technology, and war. I focus on one representative series, *UFO Robo Grendizer*, which features a giant robot who is a defender of humanity and within which we can see a symbol of Japan's relationship to the United States and to other countries.¹ I will not address the formal elements of the anime but only focus on the structural, narrative, and symbolic elements.²

I argue that in *Grendizer* the protagonist and his robot are, in the context of Japan's geopolitical position, an allegory of the relationship between Japan and the United States, in that both its American and Japanese characters are united against totalitarian invaders. The presumed political aspect of the Vegans, the enemies of the protagonist, are not specified as either fascist or communist, because the Japanese in the postwar period have repudiated both totalitarianisms. Yet in the graphic style and character

IN *GRENDIZER* THE PROTAGONIST AND HIS ROBOT ARE, IN THE CONTEXT OF JAPAN'S GEOPOLITICAL POSITION, AN ALLEGORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE UNITED STATES, IN THAT BOTH ITS AMERICAN AND JAPANESE CHARACTERS ARE UNITED AGAINST TOTALITARIAN INVADERS.

illustrations of the evil alien, whose countenance merges both pseudo-fascist/Nazi and quasi-Soviet traits, it is possible to imagine that the reference—surely slight and probably unconscious—is rather to the communists. This is due in part to the political situation in East Asia in the 1970s and to the relationship between Japan and the United States.

Understanding the plot will make it possible to see the relation between the Japanese zeitgeist in the 1970s, the ideas professed by Nagai, the director of the anime, and the Tōei producers in that period. The film focuses primarily on the role of Japan in Asia, which is—and has been—a delicate geopolitical situation. In *UFO Robo Grendizer*, the wisdom of Earth assumes a central value as the only place where it is possible to war against and, this time, defeat a foe whose power is seemingly invincible.

The plot of *UFO Robo Grendizer* acts, in a way, as a third chapter to two previous series by Nagai and Tōei: *Mazinger Z* and *Great Mazinger*. The resulting trilogy has been baptized *Mazinsaga*.³ The story of *Grendizer* begins with the Vega Nebula's Reign and their critical situation: due to the irresponsible use of atomic energy, the Reign's main planet is going to explode and shortly will become uninhabitable because of the resulting deadly *vegatron* radiation. King Vega, who with his army dedicates his very existence to attacking other planetary systems, has shortly before this occupied a pacifist planet known as the *Reign of the Fleed*, and that planet's survivors are very few.

Among them is the prince, Duke Fleed, who escapes by stealing the mighty Grendizer vehicle, a powerful Vegan weapon improved with Fleedian technology, but not before witnessing the death of his parents and the (provisional) death of his planet as it is contaminated by vegatron. After an interstellar voyage, Duke Fleed finds Earth and lands in Japan, in a green valley not far from Tokyo. Here he is detected by the Institute of Astronomic Researches, directed by Doctor Umon Genzō, who becomes his friend and hides the Grendizer vehicle in the Institute's secret underground hangars. In order to cover up Duke Fleed's identity, Umon gives him the name Daisuke, and presents him as his son. The Vegan fleet, meanwhile, is looking for a world to settle in: since the Reign's destruction, caused by radioactivity, is impending.

The Vegans reach Earth and prepare an attack with their *enbanjū* (monsters-flying saucers) by establishing a secret base on the dark side of the Moon.

Shortly thereafter, young Kabuto Kōji is returning to Japan in a TFO (terrestrial flying object) flying saucer of his own design after one year at NASA, where he has led research on UFOs and their flight technologies. He is going to the Shirakaba (white birch) farm, owned by Makiba Danbei, father of the pretty Hikaru and little Gorō. Umon and his three assistants are waiting for him. Duke Fleed pretends to be a simple guy, a lover of the country life, but Kōji notices something weird about him. Duke Fleed tries to hide his real identity, but Kōji soon discovers it. Later, a strong friendship will link them.

Meanwhile, Vega launches its first attack. Duke Fleed, a pacifist, is obliged to resume his control of Grendizer in order to protect his adoptive homeland. After many fights, Duke Fleed finds out that his sister, Maria Grace, was not dead on Fleed but has also escaped, thanks to a brave old Fleedian who, by taking her to Earth and pretending to be her grandfather, has hidden the horrible truth of her planet from her. But before dying, the old man reveals it to her, and the two Fleedian aristocrats acknowledge their relationship and shared responsibility.



FIGURE 1. The *UFO Robo Grendizer's* "good guys" From the left, facing away: Kabuto Kōji; Makiba Goro; his father, Makiba Danbei. From left, facing front: Doctor Umon Genzō; Duke Fleed in his Terrestrial clothes as Umon Daisuke; his sister, Maria Grace Fleed; Danbei's daughter, Makiba Hikari. The Terrestrial characters are all Japanese, but their apparel echoes movies from the West, which was among the reasons the series was acquired by American producer Jim Terry in 1979. *UFO Robo Grendizer*, copyright Nagai Gō / Dynamic Production / Tōei Dōga. Images provided thanks to the help of Francesco Anteri (www.tanadelletigri.info).

From now on Grendizer is no longer assisted by Kōji's flying saucer—wrecked during a fight—but by three powerful vehicles built by the Japanese and driven by Kōji, Hikaru, and Maria Grace. Called “Double Spacer,” “Marine Spacer,” and “Drill Spacer,” these vehicles can hook up to Grendizer for combat in the sky, under the sea, and under the earth. After another long series of conflicts, which clearly reveals the Vegans' perfidy, the war enters its last phase. King Vega and his few last lackeys decide not to surrender to their adversary's strength nor find an agreement with Earth's governments, and instead try to contaminate Earth through a suicide action. Grendizer's team, aided by a spatial superweapon that is assembled by uniting the four heroes' vehicles, counterattacks the Vegan fleet before King Vega's spaceship can reach the atmosphere and destroys it. Earth is safe and Duke Flead and Maria Grace can go back to Flead, which is reviving thanks to the progressive disappearance of vegatron and to the efforts of the survivors who, after exile in the space, are coming back to their homeland.

THE VILLAIN AS TOTALITARIAN INVADER

The most revealing visual aspects about the invaders are to be found in the design of the Vegan objects, which resemble something organic, and a sense of déjà vu provoked by the UFO robots. The images of the evil robots and

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other characters bring to mind—as does the Grendizer—the *oni*'s iconography in that the structure and decor of the lunar Vegan base resembles vegetable anatomy. The base tower looks like a plant, and the florescences oozing from the main body are locules for “death flowers.” The design of the fleet's motherships are reminiscent of those biomorphic shapes seen in the movie *The War of the Worlds*.⁴ The rooms are decorated with

elements recalling a leaf's cellular apparatus when seen through a microscope, and all objects, even the soldiers' armor, seem like vegetable creatures from 1950s science fiction movies.⁵

In *UFO Robo Grendizer*, but also in Nagai's other anime, the key contrast is clear: alien technology's melting, fleshy, and cybernetic forms versus the clean, rational, Japanese technology that is separate from, but implicates, humanity. The “evil science,” coming from subjects outside Japan, takes the form of an invader who is deaf to all civil confrontation. However, whereas in other



FIGURE 2. Closeup and detail of Zuril's left eye. The bionic eye shows the fusion of flesh and metal, of organic and technologic, with a monstrous rather than harmonious effect. Zuril and *UFO Robo Grendizer*, copyright Nagai Gō / Dynamic Production / Tōei Dōga.

of Nagai's series the aggressors are not really aliens (because they come from underneath or from Japan's past), in the *Grendizer's* story, the antagonists are actually extraterrestrial. This condition produces a different approach to the problem of the conflict and to the possible interpretations of the enemy.

Vega is a military hierarchy. As a classic cliché of adventure comics and animation—either Japanese or American—in *UFO Robot Grendizer*, the relationships between the evil officers and their soldiers are cool and inhuman. Soldiers are represented as deprived of individuality. The generals' aggressive behavior toward the lower officers and soldiers, and that of King Vega toward his lackeys, reveal the enemies' narrow range of attitudes. The narrative effect for the viewer is a dehumanization of the villains. The aggressors, except in their frightened veneration of King Vega, do not nourish any actual positive feelings for other group members, and their negative emotions are all aimed toward the beings outside their group.

Among the few exceptions to this narrative rule, created by the authors precisely to avoid creating too narrow a portrait of the enemies, are examples of the paternal love of a high officer, Zuril, for his son and that of King Vega himself toward his young daughter, a love that, according to the Vegan military compulsion, is broken by the parents' ideologies.

In *UFO Robo Grendizer* the counterposition between heroes and foes is Manichaeian. The enemy represents an almost absolute evil. At work here are two symbolic mechanisms that both European and Japanese audiences recognize at once: the pseudo-Roman salutation and, in the boot snap by high officers Gandal, Zuril, and Blacky, the citation of Nazi/fascist gestures.

The aim is to push the representation of evil beyond the possibility of Japanese indications. The second mechanism is the moral simplification of



FIGURE 3. Gandalf performing a sort of Roman salute. Gandalf and *UFO Robo Grendizer*, copyright Nagai Gō / Dynamic Production / Tōei Dōga.

the foe, a common tactic used in all war propaganda to reify the adversary. This psychosocial dynamic is used not only in war contexts, but also has been studied in intergroup dialectics/conflicts.⁶ That such a means is used in *Grendizer*, however, does not indicate a deliberate intent to dehumanize the enemy with the goal of absolving the protagonists' actions. In Nagai's series, the individuation of a foe sets in play a series of events that results in the suggestion that the robot exists as a toy.

But we can perceive in this narrative architecture the shadow of three other significations. The first concerns the remembrance, historically still unresolved, of Japan's violent imperialist past. In many anime, it is "exorcized" through assigning to Japan the role of the victim of bloody aggression: by turning upside down the roles of the invader/invaded, there is a sort of symbolic absolution, even if just in the TV fiction.⁷ The second signification lies in the metaphorical figure of the invader who attacks the Japanese soil with mysterious weapons, but in this anime, Japan can now react, for it too has technologically sophisticated weaponry. The third signification is perhaps the most interesting, for it might explain some unresolved issues concerning the political position of postwar Japan.

SYMBOLIC BALANCES BETWEEN INVADED AND INVADERS: EARTH-FLEED COOPERATION AS A METAPHOR OF THE JAPAN-UNITED STATES AXIS

Duke Fleed and his sophisticated robot, as foreigners wielding more advanced science and bigger firepower, are an allegory of the United States in an imprecise future—or in an alternative present—succeeding in the democratization of Japan, in the real world, by the real Americans. In *UFO Robo Grendizer*, the menace is not the U.S. military apparatus, exorcized as foe and transformed into ally through the cultural reform put in action during the occupation right after the 1945 armistice; instead, the menace is quite different, and the enemy must be sought elsewhere.

As in other fictions where a small taskforce of heroes must resist a massive alien invader, *Grendizer*, too, tells of a small group banded together to fight against a formally hierarchized and numerically larger group. After the initial surprise of the cruel Vegan aggression, the heroes must accept as ineluctable the fact they have to fight for their very survival and—some epithets against the foes apart—they try to focus on the positive feelings between the members of their own group.

The adult figures who lead the strategy against the enemy in Nagai's robot anime are always biologic and putative fathers. The young people (Duke Fleed, Kōji, Hikaru, and Maria Grace) contrast with Doctor Umon's adult figure. Kōji's irruptive character—deeply involving him in the war—and Duke Fleed's pacifist reluctance to use *Grendizer* are both in contrast to the Doctor Umon's directives, for whom war is ineluctable but must be managed with prudence. Umon's decisions are presumed wise and never really discussed by the two young pilots. Despite the youth movements, which in the real world had had their peak in 1970, this Nagaian anime proposes Japan as a simple, virtuous society still strictly based on a Confucian, or even neo-Confucian, linearity: the sons respect the father and, in general, the parental figure.

UFO Robo Grendizer, like other animated series for children—be they Japanese or not—tends to simplify the setting as mere background for the main story. The war between humans and Vegans is very local: it takes place in

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Japan, on Honshu island, which hosts Tokyo, Mount Fuji, and, in the fiction, the farm where Daisuke/Duke Fleed works, and in whose neighborhoods lies Doctor Umon's scientific institute. The Shirakaba farm, close to the institute under which Grendizer is hidden, is a hundred kilometers west of Tokyo, deep in a birch forest, which corresponds, in the real world, with the Yamanashi prefecture, whose landscapes are accurately represented in the anime.⁸

As the Vegans know, in order to conquer Earth, they must first destroy or, better yet, take possession of the mighty Grendizer. Consequently, they focus their efforts to seeking out the place where they presume the robot is hidden. In *UFO Robo Grendizer*, the reason given in the narrative for the absence of a more complex world-system made of other countries and land forces to oppose the invaders is that only Grendizer and the Japanese allies represent a suitable resistance to the extreme scientific advancement of the enemies. A deeper narratological reason, however, is that the series is founded on this spontaneously mixed group of Earthlings and Fleedians who have joined together to passionately fight for their joint survival against a formalized group where relationships are arid and nonemotional.

Theirs is a coherent group sharing a territory that is represented as *heimat* (home-like), resisting an invader who does not recognize the sacrality of the soil under attack. Historically, Honshu is the mythic Yamato nucleus, where it is thought the imperial dynasty was founded in the third century CE. The repeated representation of the same places in each episode projects the audience into landscapes that become a familiar "home." For spectators in general, but more so for Japanese, this imagined home where the heroes live assumes a tremendous sacral value precisely due to the repeated visual symbols and, above all, to those symbols directly linked to the Yamato myth from a naturalistic point of view: the red sun at dawn or at sunset, portrayed on an agrestic landscape typical of Japan.

Finally, a note on the protagonists' presumed ethnic superiority: in anime such as *Grendizer*, the pacifist ethics of the heroes are not a way to indicate their intrinsic superiority to their foes. Of course, the affirmation of Japanese nationalist purposes and imperialist actions during the colonial period, as well as a Nippon-centric philosophy of history, reveal a strong solidification of a national identity: the presumed status of Japan's superiority in comparison to the Western civilizations and to the other Asian nations.⁹ Instead, in the conflicts in *UFO Robot Grendizer* and other seventies robot/SF anime, the distinction between heroes and villains is not on an ontological level; the anime stresses, rather, how the protagonists act rationally and choose between good and evil.

JAPAN, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE POSTWAR GEOPOLITICAL SCENARIO

In 1970s Japan, the postwar period was over, and the first energy crisis (1973) had shown the definite end of the industrial era and the beginning of the postindustrial one (and of postmodernity).¹⁰ Japan was managing a complex relationship with the United States and, at the same time, managing difficult stances toward other Asian countries.

In order to better understand how Japan, war, and the geopolitical situation of the country were seen by Nagai Gō and the series' producers in the mid-seventies, we have to remember that *UFO Robo Grendizer* is the third chapter of a trilogy begun with the *Mazinger Z* and *Great Mazinger* TV shows. In the first two series the monstrous fusion of the animality and the artificiality of the invaders represents the degenerative use of technology in the West. This is especially true in contrast to the historically proposed equilibrium of the Japanese spirit with the Western science—hence, the motto *wakon yōsai*.¹¹ And in *UFO Robo Grendizer*, the parade of symbols is even more explicit: both the foes and the hero are aliens and fight on Japanese ground. Japan would be immobilized, as it occurred in real history, by a far superior power if once again the equilibrating system did not enter the game: even if Grendizer and its pilot are alien and technically superior to Japanese science as represented by Doctor Umon and his institute, they will be able to ensure survival to the new homeland only if guided by a moral and spiritual order rather than a military strategy.

William Gibson remarked that after the fast technologization ordered by the government in the second half of nineteenth century and the first part of the twentieth, and after the imperialist megalomania at the end of the Pacific War, Japanese found themselves in front of

an enemy wielding a technology that might . . . have come *from a distant galaxy*. And then that enemy, their conquerors, the Americans, turned up in person, smilingly intent on an astonishingly ambitious program of *cultural re-engineering*. . . . And then [they] left, their grand project hanging fire, and went off to fight Communism instead. [Emphasis added]¹²

In the first two series of this trilogy, the enemies are born from Western mythology. In the first series, they come from the ancient civilization of the Greek island Bardos (Rhodes in the Italian version of the anime) and in the second, from the mythic Mycenae. It would seem, then, that Japan fights

against an allegory of the West. The first two chapters of the *Mazinsaga* imply a Japan assaulted by the vestiges of a glorious cultural tradition that is, at first, superior, but that is finally overcome in the series by an elementary and rude form of patriotism.

The once-glorious Western civilization has decayed in comparison to its ancient splendor, by generating, in its turn, such horrors as mutated and hybrid monsters. It is only thanks to the specific capabilities of the Japanese spirit that first Mazinger Z and then Great Mazinger defeat their monstrous enemies from the West's past. An auto-orientalist discourse seems to answer the Western one: according to it, Japanese knowledge merges with knowledge from cultural elsewhere (yūgō), and unites its autochtone spiritual values to European-American science (*wakon yōsai*).

Whereas *Great Mazinger* sounds an alarm to Japan as a victim of an identity crisis partially formed by the growing distance from America; in *UFO Robo Grendizer*, this crisis seems to be resolved. Japan becomes an Asian leader and a global superpower and is finally freed from its old sense of inferiority.¹³

CONCLUSIONS: JAPANESE UNEASINESS FOR THE TOTALITARIAN ENCLOSURE

In *UFO Robo Grendizer*, through a metaphor of totalitarianisms, it is possible to see an elementary version of the presumed philosophy of history in contemporary Japan. Presented are two alien "factions," Vegans and Fleedians, between which there is Japan, an ally of Fleed. If the Grendizer, as Earth's friend, is a metaphor of the United States in a period of distension—in that, since the 1945 armistice, the United States has played the role of unconditional protector and ally for Japan—one might wonder who the Vegans represent.

The answer is anticipated by the final sentence in Gibson's quotation. Gibson noted that the United States, after having dramatically contributed to Japan's democratic modernization after World War II, in 1952 quickly abandoned the occupation because they were committed on other fronts. Specifically, they were concerned with Cold War containment strategies against the expansion of the Communist bloc. During Japan's occupation, and even more so in following years, Japan found itself in territorial proximity with countries that had embraced Communism in a total—and totalitarian—way: the Chinese Popular Republic of Mao's Cultural Revolution and other countries of the Asian philo-Soviet bloc such as North Korea and Vietnam. For a long time, Japan perceived itself as surrounded by nations that were living

political experiences full of deep transformation and disorder. Therefore Japan began again to nourish the sensation of being a political *unicum* in Eastern Asia, closer to the West than to the continent closest to its soil.¹⁴

The result was that the national political culture—which for internal reasons had always been based on those values that later would merge with a more modern center-right ideology—since the war had mostly oscillated between an enlightened liberalism and an American-style neoconservatism. It

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is not the case that the political power has been concentrated mostly in the moderate coalitions: the Liberal, Democratic, and Liberal-Democratic parties. The left-wing parties, very often bothered by internal dissent, have reached the electorate's trust only occasionally.

In his classic historical study, Edwin Reischauer describes the four basic psychological and intellectual factors of postwar Japan. The first was the loss of self-confidence caused by the defeat, the demilitarization, and the occupation itself.¹⁵ Nationalism and patriotism became awkward values, due to the negative effects that professing them for decades had caused. The economy and culture became more international—especially for younger generations. The Japanese attitude has been typified as a lack of self-belief and with an unconscious snobbishness toward the rest of Asia. Japan, since the great scientific and industrial outcomes at the end of the nineteenth century, has tended to compare itself only to the Western powers.¹⁶

The second tendency was a strong pacifism as a reaction to the war's disaster. In Japan, it was clear that the militarists had been wrong and that the country would need to absolutely avoid entering other wars; the general feeling was radically opposed to the possession of atomic weapons and to nuclear experimentation at home or in other countries, namely in the United States.¹⁷ Article 9 of the Constitution establishes Japan's renouncement of war as a sovereign right and the promise to stay without an offensive military force. For these reasons, the country had a diffused idea that it would need protection against the rising communist forces in the Asian region; this led to the alliance treaties with the United States. Political attitude and the public opinion have for decades insisted that Japan pursue a strict conduct of international neutrality.

The third factor was the penetration into Japanese society of Marxist doctrine. In a period where right-wing thought was declining, communist

and socialist ideas found fertile soil as a natural counter to traditional thinking, which used to put the emperor at its center.¹⁸ Although moderate or conservative thought prevails in Japan, Marxism in its different versions has put its roots down more deeply than previously thought. However, political representatives espousing these beliefs have been so divided and polemic among themselves, as happens in many other democratic countries, that it has never broadly permeated Japanese political life. Even more important, Japan is officially politically distant from communist and socialist countries and, over the years, the government and a large part of public opinion have not nourished much leftist sympathy, not during the periods of delusion caused by the political inadequacies of the Liberal-Democratic party or in those moments of vivid international or internal terrorism. In the latter case, moreover, despite the nonviolent approach by the police, the State's target has primarily been left-wing terrorism. This has been due to the national collective identity, which on this matter is uncontested.¹⁹

The fourth tendency is the "American fixation":²⁰ the wide cultural-economic alliance with United States, which continues at present. Of course, the United States has influenced Japan for decades in its economic development and in such sectors as mass and pop culture, mass media, entertainment, fashion, and commodities.

In the 1970s, the cultural and political climate was influenced by the aforementioned tendencies. Pacifism was deeply felt across generations; Japan was acquiring a more balanced self-confidence with respect to its position on the international chessboard and more specifically, in reference to the United States. This relationship reached a dramatic point during key political crises in Eastern Asia: the withdrawal of the American army from Vietnam (1975); the rise of the Red Khmers and Pol Pot in Cambodia (1975–76); the last phase of Mao's rule (and his death in 1976). This means that Japan was in a geopolitical area and in a historical period in which great attention was necessary to the ungovernable fermentation of the communist and socialist political-military forces and in which the internal pacifism, felt as a fundamental national value, was sustained by the solid military protection by the United States. It was evident that the world had been divided into a totalitarian bloc and a democratic bloc, as during the Cold War and in the local conflicts after 1945, from Korea onward.²¹ Therefore it is difficult not to see in Japanese science fiction animated tales of those years—or at least in some of them—manifestations of those fears that were common to many Japanese, articulated with the cultural symbols of those countries, those times, and those fears and desires.

Notes

1. *UFO Robo Grendizer*, from a manga by Nagai Gō (other versions of the manga are by Ōta Gosaku, Nagai's assistant), 74 episodes, Toei Animation, 1975–77; better known in Italy as *Atlas UFO Robot* (where Grendizer is “Goldrake”); in France, Canada, and in other French/Arab-speaking countries, as *Goldorak*; in the United States and other countries, as *Grandizer*. Main teleplays authors: Uehara Sozō, Fujikawa Keisuke. Animation: Ketsuta Toshio. Character design: Komatsubara Kazuo, Araki Shingō (from episode 49 on). Music: Kikuchi Shunsuke. Main directors: Katsumata Tomoharu, Ochiai Masamune.

2. For a longer analysis of the whole series and of those aspects I am here neglecting, see Marco Pellitteri, *Il Drago e la Saetta: Modelli, strategie e identità dell'immaginario giapponese* (The dragon and the dazzle: Models, strategies, and identities of Japanese imagination) (Latina: Tunué, 2008), 251–83, and Alessandro Montosi, *Ufo Robot Goldrake: Storia di un eroe nell'Italia degli anni Ottanta (UFO Robot Goldrake: Story of a eighties hero in Italy)* (Roma: Coniglio, 2007).

3. *Mazinger Z*, various directors (1972), 92 episodes; *Great Mazinger*, various directors (1974), 56 episodes; both produced by Tōei Animation and taken from the related Nagai Gō's manga.

4. *The War of the Worlds* (USA, 1953, dir. Byron Haskin), from the 1898 novel by H. G. Wells.

5. Think of movies such as *The Thing from Another World* (USA, 1951, dir. Christian Nyby) and *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (USA, 1956, dir. Don Siegel).

6. In the cases of intergroup tension or conflict, the ingroup, by dehumanizing the outgroup, can more easily act against them. Among the many possible sources on this issue, see at least Henry Tajfel, *Human Groups and Social Categories: Studies in Social Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); John C. Turner, Michael A. Hogg, Penelope J. Oakes, Stephen D. Reicher, Margaret S. Wetherell, *Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-Categorization Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987); and Maria Paola Paladino and Jeroen Vaes, “L'umanità negata: I nuovi processi di de-umanizzazione” (Humanity denied: The new processes of dehumanization), *Psicologia contemporanea* 191 (2005): 73–79.

7. This is directed more to the authors themselves than to the very young watchers, who could hardly be expected to understand the nuances hidden in such symbols, but who would be able to recognize them years later.

8. Giovanni Vilella (under pseud. Alcor), “Goldrake: Locations,” in *Il Fantastico Mondo di Go Nagai* (The fantastic world of Go Nagai) Web site: <http://www.nagaifans.it/goldrake/locations/locations.htm> (accessed February 2007).

9. On Japan's history during colonialism/imperialism, see John W. Dower, *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), and Michael Weiner, *Race and Migration in Imperial Japan* (London: Routledge, 1994).

10. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

11. This motto is the modern adaptation of a more ancient one, *wakon kansai*, “Japanese spirit, Chinese techniques,” famous in mid-nineteenth century to indicate the Japanese debt towards Chinese culture. See Michael Carr, “Yamato-Damashii ‘Japanese Spirit’ Definitions,” *International Journal of Lexicography* 7, no. 4 (1994), 279–306.

12. William Gibson, "Modern Boys and Mobile Girls," *The Observer* Web site (April 1, 2001), http://observer.guardian.co.uk/life/story/0,6903,46639100.html#article_continue (accessed May 2007).

13. Cf. at least Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Re-Inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

14. Umesao Tadao, "Bunmei no seitai shikan yosetsu" (Civilization in ecologic history perspective), *Chūō Kōron*, February 1957; cited in Iwabuchi Koichi, *Recentring Globalization: Popular Culture and Asian Transnationalism* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2002), 63.

15. Edwin O. Reischauer, *Japan, Past and Present*, 2nd ed. (Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1952), 250–51.

16. *Ibid.*, 251.

17. *Ibid.*, 251–52.

18. *Ibid.*, 253–54.

19. Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1996), 96.

20. Reischauer, *Japan, Past and Present*, 256–57.

21. Reischauer published the third edition of his book in 1964, and even then he stated that these four attitudes are not static. In fact, they have changed much during the decades. Japan today is not as pacifist as before; its self-confidence is high; left-wing ideas seem to be more in the minority than they were at the end of the seventies; and the relationship with the United States is no longer a psychological-cultural vassalage but instead a more balanced dialog. Moreover, one can see some fatigue with the presence of American forces in Japanese territories. But of course it is clear to all in Japan that the United States is the best possible ally, especially in the face of possible friction with Beijing and Pyongyang. Besides, today the Cold War's containment has vanished, since the countries of the philo-Soviet bloc—with the exception of North Korea—have undergone a quasi-total adoption of capitalism in an international market system and are accordingly experiencing economic growth.