JOURNAL OF SCIENCE FICTION
Volume 2, Issue 1, September 2017
ISSN 2472-0837

Loving the Alien, Hating the Hybrid: A Cultural Study of *Robotech*

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Abstract: In 1980s Japan, a struggle between the old guard, harmonious collective mentality and the idealism of the new breed of independent, rebellious youngsters became illustrated in anime. Three examples of Japanese animated series that televised this struggle were acquired, repackaged, rewritten, and rebroadcast in America by Carl Macek under the one name — *Robotech*. *Robotech*, the American TV series, is a hybrid in and of itself with its Japanese-created visuals married an American-rewritten storyline. In addition to the show's own mixed heritage, *Robotech* contains multiple interracial and interspecies (human and alien) couples and hybrid offspring. This paper explores the hybrid nature of the American *Robotech* animated TV series and how the Eighties' generational struggle in Japan manifests itself through two hybrid, interspecies characters: Dana Sterling and Marlene/Ariel.

Keywords: *Robotech*, Anime, Alien, Hybrid, Miscegenation, Gaijin, Shinjinrui, Carl Macek, Japan, interracial relationships

Introduction

Two key terms that will be used repeatedly in this work are "Alien" and "Hybrid". Alien is in reference to extraterrestrial beings and their attributes as displayed within the *Robotech* storyline. Hybrid refers to the offspring or byproduct of two "parent" individuals or cultures that have joined together. The parents can be two different Earth ethnicities or a human/ alien pairing. Hybrid can also be applied to the nature of the *Robotech* television series itself — since *Robotech* isn't a straight adaptation of a Japanese anime series. American producer Carl Macek rewrote three Japanese series into one all-encompassing television series called "*Robotech*" for American audiences. Therefore, *Robotech* itself is a byproduct of joining two distinct cultures through creative fashioning of American storytelling and Japanese visuals.

In the mid-1980s, young science fiction fans were hungry for something to fill the void created by the conclusion of the original *Star Wars* trilogy. Enter the animated television series Robotech — a "sweeping science-fiction anime epic of humans defending their home world against alien domination" (Tarmey, 2011), and the brainchild of television writer and producer Carl Macek. *Robotech* introduced an American television audience to the Japanese animation style known as anime, and earned Macek the unofficial title as the "Grandfather of Anime" (Letz, 2006). While several anime series came before *Robotech*, including *Astro Boy*, *Star Blazers* and *Speed Racer*, no previous series targeted such a wide demographic that was "not bracketed by age or nationality" (Reynolds and Cherry, p. 7, 1987). As a result, *Robotech* quickly garnered a large, loyal fanbase. However, while *Robotech* appeared to be a "very refreshing and very timely" multi-generational science fiction fantasy promoting "acceptance, unity and getting along" (Wahlgren, 2006), twisting Japanese culture into an American storyline incited some anger and even violence. Established American fans of anime originally viewed *Robotech* as a straight adaptation and loved it. Upon their discovery that *Robotech* was three Japanese shows — *Super Dimension Fortress Macross*, *Super Dimension Calvary Southern Cross* and *Genesis Climber Mospeada* — altered into one "new" American product, many of the fans were insulted. These fans saw this repurposing as a sacrilegious degradation of an esteemed art form, and they expressed these feelings. Art appeared to imitate life with *Robotech* in the sense that the three series had multiple "outsider" characters who faced fear, disgust,

and violence upon the exposure of their mixed heritage. The *Robotech* television series perpetuated an ideology that celebrates mixed couples while despising their offspring, also known as "hybrids."

I'll scrutinize three human-alien couples within the Robotech narrative and draw conclusions based on the examples of hybrid hatred within these relationships.

***Robotech*: A Crash Course**

Robotech starts in the late 20th Century. Every nation on Earth is involved in World War III. However, the global conflict comes to an abrupt halt when an unoccupied spaceship crash-lands on Macross Island in the South Pacific. Humanity finally puts aside their differences and works together to rebuild the mammoth space fortress dubbed "The SDF-1". During the rebuilding process, they discover Robotechnology, which combines space-faring war weaponry with the ability to transform into various configurations to perform specific tasks. The new technology reclaimed by humans was fueled via the byproduct of an alien flower. Protoculture—and whatever secrets it holds—is desperately sought after by three distinct alien races that successively attack Earth and humanity to obtain the Protoculture and its related devices aboard the SDF-1. Each alien invasion of Earth occurred within one of three human generations. Each of the human generations—and its accompanying alien enemy—struggle to accept the opposing culture and the resulting mixed offspring that both cultures produce (Macek, *Robotech,* Episodes 1-85, 1985).

Hybrids and *Robotech*

In light of colonial and postcolonial studies, the mixing of cultures is not to be taken lightly. In his essay "Signs Taken For Wonders," Homi K. Bhabha calls it a "sign of the productivity of colonial power" but also describes it as "problematic," as the differences in the original cultures from both the colonizer and colonized can no longer be identified or even recognized (Bhabha, 2004, pp.154-156).

In an international study of public reception to animal, ethnic, and racial hybrids, Austrian social psychologist Wolfgang Wagner and fellow psychology professors surveyed university students in Austria, India, and Japan in regard to their opinions of children from a "cross-cutting ethnic factor." According to the findings of Wagner, et al, "offspring of mixed marriages are perceived as lacking a clearly defined identity" by political conservatives. Liberal students not only favored the hybrid, they gave higher numerical ratings for mixed ethnic children over "in-group" pure ethnic children than did the conservatives. However, while the results indicated polar opposite views towards hybrids, both groups championed purity in ethnicity, as people produced from parents of the same social, ethnic, and racial backgrounds were valued for maintaining the "essence" of their native culture (Wagner et al., 2010).

The rejection of ethnically mixed offspring is ever-present within the narrative text of *Robotech*. Mixed couples endured social, political, and military struggles forced upon them by those in power. Within all three generational chapters of the *Robotech* saga, humanity is at war with alien invaders until one human falls in love with one alien, or vice versa. At that point, the story shifts towards the difficult pursuit of a truce between humans and the alien armada. Often, there are additional supporting characters also involved in mixed relationships. However, while mixed couples are idealized and championed, their hybrid offspring are despised or discarded in both the Japanese original TV series and the American combination of series that make up *Robotech*.

The Political Economy of *Robotech*

From 1965 to 1985, dozens of Japanese anime programs on American television suffered the fate of having their complex storylines watered down due to the efforts of protective parental pressure groups striving to cleanse television

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for children's safety. The American stigma that "cartoons are just for kids" reduced pre-*Robotech* anime to a very limited genre with only one demographic: young boys (Reynolds & Carlton, 1986, p. 220).

If anime fans of any age or background wanted to see anime programs that were remotely close to their original storylines, they needed to know somebody who had the capability of recording Japanese television or they watched these shows at science fiction conventions. Keep in mind that this is an early cable TV, pre-Internet world with limited content-sharing capabilities. It was under this political economy that Carl Macek crafted his vision of *Robotech*:

> I saw the potential of bringing something like this into the country and exposing it to a larger audience than twenty-five guys in a room with a reel-to-reel tape recorder. There was a great market with the anticipation of toys, models, and stuff like that. I thought it would be a cool way to increase the awareness and sale of this product in the States to have animation available for fans to look at. (Otaku Unite!, 2004)

Like Star Wars, Robotech treated intergalactic warfare with eye-pleasing visuals, complex character development, and budding romantic relationships. However, what separated Robotech from Star Wars and other science fiction franchises is that Robotech celebrated and questioned war and love simultaneously, as if war and love were in a constant struggle. Thomas Lamarre described the type of question raised as "…how can you enjoy your war and rue it too?" (Lamarre, p. 147, 2009) Robotech answers this question by not simplifying aliens and humans as "good guys" or "bad guys", but by showcasing potential change within individuals and their cultures. An excellent example of this is Miriya — who transformed from a destructive, murderous Zentraedi fighter pilot into the loving wife of Max Sterling and mother of his children. Ironically, *Robotech*'s ongoing storylines of love vs. war and the costs of lives in battle inspired the Lucasfilm animator/director Dave Filoni to create two *Star Wars* animated series: Cartoon Network's *The Clone Wars* and DisneyXD's *Star Wars Rebels*:

> "That animated series," Filoni said, "showed me as a kid that, 'Wow, these characters can die. Roy Fokker got shot down. How does that work?' The romance in it made me feel very much like what was happening in *Star Wars*. The Zentraedi battle cruisers… It was all so incredible to me and it made me say, 'I want to grow up and make an animated series like that.'" (Young, 2016)

The acceptance of "the other" was a challenging notion, especially when you consider that *Robotech* was airing in 1985, a time when many viewers —myself included — went to bed at night wondering if our Cold War enemies would initiate a nuclear war and wipe out life on our planet. In that era of paranoia, aliens were often portrayed as "the others" — destructive monsters bent on destroying humanity. In 1988, Mercury Theater radio playwright Howard Koch commented that he did aliens an "injustice" by writing the Martians as the cause of human suffering in Orson Welles' infamous 1938 War of the Worlds radio broadcast. Koch wrote, "The threat, I believe, comes not from outer but from inner space where our warriors, hot and cold, invade our minds to fan our prejudices and fatten their purses" (Koch, 1988, p. 3).

Macek responded to all these factors with his hybrid of Japanese animation and American rewriting. The *Robotech* series earned syndication in more than 90 domestic television markets in its first year (Reynolds and Carlton, p. VII, 1986) and continues to have a fan base today. What Macek couldn't predict, however, was who he was going to insult by rewriting made-in-Japan animated series, and who he would win over as lifelong fans.

Robotech **Reception (or Hating/Loving the Hybrid)**

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In 1985, when I was 13, *Robotech* played twice a day on my television. I quickly became fixated on the show, joined the *Robotech* fan club, and received the very first issues of the aptly named *Robotech* fanzine, "Protoculture Addicts." Whenever I introduced the show to friends, they also became fans. The closest things to *Robotech* at the time were the *G.I. Joe* and *Transformers* animated series. Characters waged war in those series, but they always managed to leave a battle unscathed. *Robotech* not only portrayed characters dying, but also gave other characters time to react and reflect on their comrades' death. "Thank you for showing the children that it's all right to mourn, to grieve a loss of a friend," one teacher wrote to Macek and the movie/television distributor Harmony Gold. "Thank you for showing us what it's like to lose someone" (Reynolds & Carlton, p.222, 1986). Soon after its television debut, *Robotech* conventions — much like the original *Star Trek* conventions — were organized. Macek was officially invited to speak at the first convention in San Francisco, with roughly 8,000 people attending. At Macek's lecture, the auditorium was filled to capacity with fans hanging on his every word:

> No matter what I said, it was great. They thought I was like this amazing personality they wanted to deal with....like I was George Lucas....Gene Roddenberry who had come down to talk to them... (Otaku Unite!, 2004)

However, when Macek explained how he took three original Japanese stories and rewrote them into one, the tide turned quickly as serious anime fans disapproved. Some fans even compared his creative procedure to rape and murder...

> Immediately afterwards someone hand-printed a pamphlet and started calling me the Anti-Christ ...everyone was awe-inspired and then it turned sour...People would track me down and threaten my life. They would put up posters and put up little slogans like 'You raped our daughters and killed our mothers.', 'We know where you live. We'll find you and track you down.' People would make dart boards with my face on it at conventions. My face would appear with targets on them. I became the object of fan scorn. (Otaku Unite!, 2004)

However, as time went on, dedicated *Robotech* fans kept the series alive and openly supported Carl Macek. *San Francisco Chronicle* columnist Jeff Yang reported that Carl Macek was "directly responsible for the mainstreaming of Japanese animation in America" and called *Robotech* "an unusual hybrid" and a "masterful work of Asian/American fusion." (Yang, 2010) Yang also commented, "And like most attempts to blur the lines between cultures, it provoked hostility from those who saw such mixing an atrocity." Fans would even call the process of altering anime for U.S. consumption "Macek-ering," stressing the word play to sound like "massacring" (Yang, 2010).

After *Robotech* went off the air, the franchise survived thanks to fan-based support of books, role-playing games, videogames, and consumer videos of the series. *Robotech* was even the subject of a comedic sketch on Late Night with Conan O'Brien (Yun, 2011). In 2006, Harmony Gold released a new *Robotech* movie entitled *Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles*, which won several film festival honors. In the wake of successful robotic movies such as *Transformers* and *Pacific Rim,* a *Robotech* live action movie deal has moved from studio to studio and currently resides at Sony Pictures. In 2015, Sony announced that *Furious 7* director James Wan would be associated with the project and may direct the *Robotech* live-action feature post-2017 (Kelley, 2016). MTV listed *Robotech* as one of "7 Awesome 1980s Cartoons You Should Have Watched" saying, "This show was like what explodes in a sensitive teen's head every fifteen seconds...Seriously, it was awesome..." (McGinley, 2011). In 2011, IGN.com listed *Robotech* as #34 in its list of "Top 100 Animated Series" and summed up its importance by writing, "...it changed the

way we looked at cartoons and raised the bar for storylines" (IGN Entertainment Games, 2011).

GAIJIN and the SHINJINRUI

In considering the transitions that occurred in Japanese filmmaking, and separating these films from U.S. films, it is useful to look at Godzilla movies, the first of which was produced in 1954. The *Godzilla* movies reflected traditional Japanese concerns with harmony in nature, and the importance of the collective working together to defeat the beast or complete the task at hand (Treat, p. 240, 1996). This mindset was still very prevalent in 1980s Japan, especially among working class adults. Unlike Americans at the time, Japanese managers and workers "suffered no identity loss" when they compromised ownership of a project, status in the office, or even personal relationships for the sake of the company or a government. However, a struggle within Japanese culture in the 1980s would give birth to a label for the next generation of Japanese celluloid heroes: the Shinjinrui. A reflection of young Japanese adults and their need to distinguish themselves from their parents' generation, "Shinjinrui" translates as "new beings." Shinjinrui is a term that a Japanese media critic used to describe Tetsuo, a troubled teenage character in 1988's blockbuster anime feature film *Akira*. Set in the *Blade Runner*-esque future city of Neo-Tokyo, *Akira* tells the tale of a runt biker gang member who is turned into a "rampaging psychic psychopath" with unbelievable and uncontrollable powers of destruction (Chisholm, Web, 1990). Tetsuo doesn't fit in anywhere—at school, at home, or in his gang. He even struggles relating and communicating with his girlfriend. As a result, Tetsuo literally and figuratively becomes a monster of Godzilla-type proportions, growing to a grotesquely bloated form and squashing people like grapes in the process. Japanese teenagers of the Eighties rebelled – instead of being the cooperative collective defeating the monster, they wanted to be set apart as the monster.

The Japanese term "gaijin refers to "an outsider", or someone not born and raised in Japan who now lives, works, and plays in Japan. People associated with a gaijin in professional or romantic relationships have been cautioned, treated poorly and, ultimately, shunned (Katzenstein, p.212, 1989). Yet in the 1980s, Japanese teens and twentysomethings celebrated the gaijin, and even wanted to become that outsider in order to be a member of the "new breed" of Japanese, the Shinjinrui.

Robotech plays with this conflict of the harmonious collective versus the awkward outsider in each generation of Robotech warriors. In *Robotech*, the United Earth Government and all of the enemy alien invaders initially follow the collective mentality. Everyone must contribute to what's best for their species: humanity, Zendtraedi, Robotech Masters, or Invid. Thus, the lines for war are clearly drawn and the viewer is asked to root for humanity first. However, as each war continues, a cross-contamination of cultures occurs and certain individuals—some purebred, some not—rise to greater importance than any one cause. In the first Robotech war, a Chinese teenager named Minmei, who is living amongst Japanese islanders-turned-space-wayfarers, becomes a celebrated pop star and the most important individual in the war, leading many Zendtraedi to defect and thereby turning the tide of war, saving planet Earth.

Half-human, half-Zendtraedi Dana Sterling is the lead character in the second generation of Robotech warriors. Again, the alien and Earthling leaders are portrayed as stubborn warmongers whose authority begins to be questioned by individuals such as Dana and her peers. As one of Dana's direct reports says, "We are only pawns in headquarters' game of 'Name That Alien.' We play by their rules, gambling our lives for their reputation…" (Macek, Robotech Episode 43: Prelude to Battle, 1985). Dana's roles as both a hybrid outsider and leader proved to be valuable and troublesome throughout the story, as she is both a gaijin and commander of the United Earth

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Defense Forces' 15th Armored Tactical Squadron. She is another dangerous member of the Shinjinrui with power, authority, and a knack for disobeying military orders.

Shortly after the second war exhausts Earth's defenses, the third war is almost immediately set up. The Invid have quickly conquered Earth at the beginning of this final chapter, and Earthlings are either slaves to the Invid or the invaders trying to reclaim their ancestral homeland. A guerrilla-style war unfolds, and the viewer travels along with a ragtag group of human soldiers who adopt a mysterious, beautiful amnesiac they mistake for human. Given the name "Ariel" by her alien mother/creator, the amnesiac is called Marlene by her human companions. Ariel/Marlene becomes increasingly important as the war rages on and is the key player to the resolution of this final intergalactic conflict. Ironically, a fellow gaijin/Shinjinrui hero and member of the same ragtag team often comes to her aid and provides words of wisdom on dealing with pain and awkwardness. Lancer, a male soldier who is also a cross-dresser and occasional performs on stage as a female rock star, saves her life more than once. When Ariel begins to struggle with her identity and feels she should leave the group, Lancer encourages her to stay saying, "I know what you're going through, but you must press on despite the pain and fear…" (Macek, Robotech Episode 77: The Midnight Sun, 1985). Robotech uses this struggle between the old school collective thinking versus individual identity to push its storyline forward.

Media Influences on *Robotech*

As Japan saw the beginning of a struggle between the time-honored tradition of preserving the collective and the new movement towards valuing individuality, a wave of American philosophers and writers called for "the abolition of racial categories" and believed that "mixed-race Americans could contribute to an improved America" (Carter, p.163, 2013). In the Eighties, the same decade *Robotech* premiered on American television, media-makers responded to this school of thought by producing more content about the United States as a place where the intermingling of ethnicities was not only acceptable but encouraged. Several films reflecting this acceptance include *Brewster's Millions* (1985), *A View to a Kill* (1985), *Soul Man* (1986), *La Bamba* (1987), *Lethal Weapon* (1987) and *Hairspray* (1988). The 1980s were also the hey-day of "The United Colors of Benetton" multicultural advertising campaign that featured individuals of various races posing happily together in Benetton clothing. MTV, the curated television network of music videos that was a cornerstone of 1980s pop culture, repeatedly broadcast displays of interracial romance in videos such as Squeeze's "Black Coffee in Bed" (1982), Duran Duran's "Hungry Like The Wolf" (1982), David Bowie's "China Girl" (1983) and "Loving the Alien" (1984), Jermaine Jackson and Pia Zadora's "When the Rain Begins to Fall" (1984), Sade's "The Sweetest Taboo" (1985), Prince and Sheena Easton's "U Got The Look" (1987) and Madonna's "Like a Prayer" (1989). As a result of this media movement, public acceptance of interracial couples was higher than it had ever been before (Carter, p.162-3, 2013). Many mixed couples populate the three generations within the *Robotech* storyline. This acceptance of interracial cultures is typified by a speech by the Captain of the SDF-1 Henry Gloval at the interracial wedding of human warrior Max and Zendtraedi warrior Miriya. Gloval stresses that the people aboard the SDF-1 must forgive their enemies, look to the Zentraedi's "good nature," and learn to live with different people and nations, especially since since that is what Max and Miriya are doing for each other. Gloval's speech highlights how, through marriage, Max and Miriya are now unknowing revolutionaries in the ongoing battle of perception and acceptance of interspecies relations. Likewise, simply by her birth, their daughter Dana is also a revolutionary. This speech, written by *Robotech* writer/producer Carl Macek, offers the notion that interspecies couples and their offspring are quiet revolutionaries, which parallels the attitude of interracial couples in America at the time. As scholar Maria P.P. Root wrote, "Everyone who

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enters into an interracial relationship or is born of racially different heritages is conscripted into a quiet revolution" (Carter, p.167, 2013).

Dana continues to challenge Zentraedi traditional thinking as the leader of the Earth Defense Forces' 15th Armored Tactical Squadron, a rule-breaker challenging authority.

Dana readily admits to her status as an outsider and is quite proud of her mixed heritage. This pride doesn't make life any easier for her or those under her command, and yet she is constantly handed dangerous, seemingly impossible missions after she and her team have tremendous success with their unconventional approaches to warfare. Her "gaijin-ness" is well-established on Earth before the story takes her into the confines of the Robotech Masters' ships – which are populated by clone slave citizens who are brainwashed to work together and avoid any "unhealthy amount of self-awareness" (Macek, Robotech Episode 25: Wedding Bells, 1985). The renegade stowaway that she is, Dana makes several speeches against the insanity of being part of a collective and tries to liberate several clones from the "slavery" of thinking like everyone else. This costs the lives of many of the people she is trying to save. Yet, thanks to Dana and her team, the few that make it out of the Robotech Masters' mind control enjoy their liberation and newfound free will, and Dana assumes the messianic role of championing the cause to "just be yourself" (Macek, *Robotech* Episode 55: Dana in Wonderland, 1985). Once again, the old guard of the Japanese collective is criticized, and the new awkward outsider is idolized.

In line with her rebellious approach to leadership, Dana encourages the interspecies relationship that ignites between Bowie Grant, an African American male soldier in Dana's squadron, and Musica, a non-military Robotech Master clone responsible for keeping the other worker-clones content. When Bowie and Musica both abandon their posts to pursue their romance, chaos and disaster ensue. During their trek, Musica is overwhelmed by love but simultaneously worried about her people. Bowie answers her concern:

> You and I are from different worlds, yet we belong together...Your and our people are at war, but that doesn't matter. We'll be different because we'll be an island of peace in an ocean of hate and misery (Macek, *Robotech* Episode 55: Dana in Wonderland, 1985).

Bowie preaches to Musica that their forbidden love is not only permissible, but inspirational - much like Dana's parents, the quiet revolutionaries Max and Miriya Sterling. Later, on a mission to save his godfather Rolf Emerson who has been captured by the Robotech Masters, Bowie and Musica survive a costly battle. Emerson's dying words to Bowie champion Bowie's actions and the intermingling of races:

> Don't make the same mistakes our generation did. In the future, two different races of people must learn to co-exist in harmony. The future is up to all of you (Macek, *Robotech* Episode 59: The Invid Connection, 1985).

Emerson's words echo the major shift in the American illustration of mixed people in the late 80s and early 90s. At that time, media makers and scholars pushed racially-mixed people in a positive light hoping their popularity would initiate the "end of race" altogether.

Another aspect of the transition in thinking that was occurring in society was the aspect of the "middle generation" (Williamson, p. 193, 1995). This middle generation was raised to initially accept only one of their racial identities, only to be later challenged to marry the two cultures of their mixed origin. They had a massive undertaking to create a free space where individuals "value themselves for themselves alone" and not a sole affiliation to one race. They spent their entire lives to make this new world all the while experiencing "an unending double struggle" filled with confusion, despair, and "seemingly lack of progress." (Williamson, p. 194, 1995). Like her

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hybrid predecessor Dana Sterling, interspecies child Marlene/Ariel deals with the conflict of two cultural identities.

Marlene is initially found near an abandoned village on and, although initially thought to human, a resistance group realizes that she is actually an Invid simulagent named Ariel (Macek, *Robotech* Episodes 61-85, 1985). Several characters question whether Ariel is "one of them," but they always dispel the thought of her being an alien after she shows acts of kindness, which include kissing team members. When Ariel first kisses Scott, it is a tender scene as Scott is just as vulnerable and timid as amnesic Ariel. However, Ariel interrupts the kiss as she grabs Scott's arm in pain and yells, "It's hopeless! The Invid are coming! The Invid are coming!" (Macek, *Robotech* Episode 79: Frostbite, 1985). Ariel is constantly torn between trying to be human and Invid at the same time.

Even though the Invid attempt to recall Ariel, Ariel repeatedly denies her alien identity. It is only near the end battle when Ariel is wounded that she comes to terms with her alien nature. As green blood gushes from her wound, Ariel screams, shakes her head, and flees crying. Witnessing this scene, the entire resistance group is in shock. Jupiter Division soldier Sue Graham challenges Scott to accept the fact that their "Marlene" is really an Invid…

> Sue Graham: Scott, the facts are staring you right in the face and you're just gonna have to believe what you see.
>
> Scott Bernard: You're wrong, Sue, because that woman proves that what a person is made of doesn't determine their spirit or love they possess. But we got to accept one thing: Marlene will never feel the same around us knowing what she knows now. She has a new life to learn. (Macek, *Robotech* Episode 83: Reflex Point, 1985).

In reality, Scott and the team are the ones that need to learn a "new life" of acceptance. While they loved Ariel as "Marlene the Human," they hate her as "Ariel the Alien." In the climatic end battle, Ariel brings her friends into the Invid headquarters to prove to Regis, her Invid leader, that humanity is worth saving. Yet, her friends now are befuddled by her alien identity and verbally express their newfound hatred of her. She questions their hatred, reminding the group that they liked her as a human and asks, "Why do you hate me now?" One of the group replies, "Because you're an alien." After Ariel further explains that she is a hybrid of Invid and humanity, they are even more skeptical…

> Ariel: I am neither human nor completely Invid. I am a new form of life that is a blending of the two.
>
> Lancer: And this new form of life is planning on replacing the old one, I suppose. (Macek, Robotech Episode 84: Dark Finale, 1985)

Even though some members of the resistance team change their minds, Scott cannot love her. Ariel's inability to be accepted as a "blending of the two" is somewhat similar to the plight of the "tragic mulatto" character in the first film to deal with interracial romance, Pinky. Named after its main character, Pinky is a film dealing with a "fair-skinned Negro nurse" who passed for white in the North but encounters problems from both the segregated black and white communities in her Southern hometown. After a journey of self-discovery, Pinky makes many sacrifices, including her choice to end her romance with her white fiancée. While Pinky gains pride in her race and becomes a wiser woman, she is not happy with societal limitations that prevents her from finding love (Bogle, p. 150-2, 1973). Ariel's fate is the same, as she cannot find common ground with her Invid mother nor her would-be human lover. By the end of *Robotech*, Ariel is like Pinky, a wise but lonely survivor.

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Conclusion

Film critic John Baxter called science fiction cinema "the poetry of the atomic age, a shorthand evocation of the pressures that are making us what we are and will be" (Baxter, p. 13, 1969). Such is the case with *Robotech*. A hybrid of Japanese animation and American writing, *Robotech* capitalized on American aspirations to embrace all that is alien and new, while at the same time invoking xenophobia. Playing on Cold War fear of nuclear holocaust, *Robotech* replayed the cataclysmic end of humanity three times over, dealt by alien weapons of mass destruction. While *Robotech* promoted interracial social and sexual experimentation, it clearly illustrated that any outcome of those relations would face fear and rejection.

Although pioneering the exploration of mature themes within animated television, *Robotech* did not gain the pop culture success of the other robot-infested animated series of the 80s, The Transformers. In 2006, Harmony Gold did muster enough resources to complete the feature film *Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles*, an animated sequel to the television series. *Shadow Chronicles* not only reunited Scott and Ariel, but championed the acceptance and necessity of hybrids. *Shadow Chronicles* featured several hybrid heroines, in addition to Ariel, including a hybrid robot Janice and Maia, the youngest daughter of human/alien couple Max and Miriya Sterling (*Robotech: The Shadow Chronicles*, DVD, 2006). In a clever cross-promotion of the new Robotech movie, the animated characters of Scott and Ariel appeared in a United Nations Public Service Announcement. Within the spot, the human/alien hybrid Ariel informs a pensive Scott that while his people are capable of destruction, humanity also has "the greatest potential in itself: to educate, to heal, to provide…together you can do this. Together, you can succeed…" (ShinnSakura, Web, 2011).

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