

**“WOMEN HAVE STOPPED BECOMING MOTHERS AND MEN HAVE LET THAT
HAPPEN.” FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD IN YOSHIYUKI TOMINO’S
MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM FRANCHISE**

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Syksy 2023

JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO

Tiedekunta Humanistis-yhteiskuntatieteellinen tiedekunta	Laitos Kieli- ja viestintätieteiden laitos
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Työn nimi "Women have stopped becoming mothers and men have let that happen." Fatherhood and motherhood in Yoshiyuki Tomino's Mobile Suit Gundam franchise	
Oppiaine Englanti	Työn laji Maisterin tutkielma
Aika Joulukuu 2023	Sivumäärä 48
Tiivistelmä <p>Ohjaaja Yoshiyuki Tominon luoma Mobile Suit Gundam animesarja on yksi maailman suosituimmista. Analyysini keskittyy kahteen tv-sarjaan; Mobile Suit Gundam (1979) ja Mobile Suit Victory Gundam (1993) ja yhteen elokuvaan Mobile Suit Gundam F91 (1991). Tutkimuskysymykseni liittyvät isyyden ja äitiyden representaatioihin näissä teoksissa. Ohjaaja Tominon mielestä julkisesti esitettävän teoksen on oltava jakamisen arvoinen. Aiempaa tutkimusta on myös tehty, joka osoittaa että lasten mediankulutuksella on vaikutus heidän kehitykseensä ja ymmärrykseensä. Tominon sarjat ovat ensisijaisesti suunnattuja nuorille pojille mutta niillä on aina ollut kaikenikäisiä ja sukupuolisia faneja.</p> <p>Olen käyttänyt laadullista sisällönanalyysia toistuvien teemojen, symbolien, juonien ja hahmojen keräämiseen ja tutkimiseen. Analyysissä paljastui se miten isyyden ja äitiyden representaatiot esiintyivät ja muuttuivat ajan myötä yhteiskunnallisten muutosten yhteydessä.</p> <p>Äitiyden rooli on yhdistettynä regressioon ja menneisyyteen kun taas isyyden rooli on yhdistettynä evoluutioon ja muutokseen. Tämä yleisasetus tuodaan esille alkuperäisessä Mobile Suit Gundam tv-sarjassa. Tätä asetusta haastetaan kun isyyden rooli on vallassa ilman tasapainottavaa äitiyden vaikutusta Mobile Suit Gundam F91:ssä ja vastavuoroisesti Mobile Suit Victory Gundam näyttää miltä maailma näyttää kun äitiyden vaikutus on vallassa ilman tasapainottavaa isyyden vaikutusta.</p>	
Asiasanat Qualitative content analysis, Anime, English, Yoshiyuki Tomino, Mobile Suit Gundam, F91, Victory, mecha	
Säilytyspaikka Jyväskylän yliopisto	
Muita tietoja	

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1. INTRODUCTION

Yoshiyuki Tomino, a renowned figure in the Japanese animation (anime) industry, received the Person of Cultural Merit award on November 4, 2021 (Barder, 2021), which coincided with his 80th birthday. This award is a significant honor, and Tomino is one of only two individuals within the Japanese animation industry to have received it. The other being Hayao Miyazaki, who among the anime industry has had more research done on his works than anyone else in English, whereas Tomino has gotten barely any. In his acceptance speech and various interviews over the years, Tomino has expressed a strong belief in the cultural significance of storytelling. According to his perspective, not only his own narratives but those of others should hold cultural value and be suitable for consumption by the broader public (Tomino, 2011:106). This implies a commitment to creating content that goes beyond mere entertainment and resonates with broader societal themes. Yoshiyuki Tomino began his career in February 1964 as a production assistant on *Astro Boy* (Tezuka, 1963). He eventually rose to one of the most prolific episode directors on show (Watzky, 2023). *Astro Boy* is considered to be the first tv anime series (Watzky, 2023). This means that Tomino has been a part of the modern anime industry since its inception, and he still continues creating new works to this day. Among his many series the crowning achievement is no doubt the *Mobile Suit Gundam* franchise, which is among the highest grossing media franchises in the world, side by side other giants like *Spider-Man*, *Batman* and *Harry Potter* (Hallman, 2019).

Tomino's creative focus is reflected in the themes he considers essential in his works. Concepts such as families, ideologies, societal inequality, technology, and miscommunication are integral to his storytelling. By incorporating these themes, Tomino seeks to address and explore complex aspects of human existence and society, making his work more meaningful and relevant on a cultural level. The emphasis on cultural significance and broad accessibility

suggests that Tomino sees storytelling as a powerful medium for conveying ideas and fostering a deeper understanding of societal issues. By receiving the Person of Cultural Merit award, Tomino's contributions to the cultural landscape, particularly through the medium of animation, are officially recognized and celebrated. This acknowledgment reinforces the importance of his work in shaping and enriching the cultural fabric of Japan and beyond.

Researching the Gundam franchise is worthwhile for an English-speaking audience for several compelling reasons. The company which owns the Gundam franchise, Bandai Namco, is increasing its focus on expanding the Gundam franchise outside of Japan more than before since the overseas sales have been starting to exceed the domestic sales (Baron, 2019). The fact that Bandai, a major Japanese toy and entertainment company, is investing more resources into globalizing Gundam indicates the franchise's potential to resonate with audiences beyond its home country. This focus includes the creation of international Gundam productions such as the Hollywood Gundam movie currently in production from Legendary Pictures (Baron, 2019). This coincides with the Japanese media including anime and manga becoming more and more popular around the world. The anime industry has seen a growing increase in profits in the past decades and shows no signs of stopping (Masuda et al, 2021: 6). Similarly manga or Japanese comic books has been steadily gaining a larger customer base overseas, vastly outselling American comic books in their own market (Miller & Griep, 2021).

Transitioning from the Gundam franchise's global expansion, we delve into the broader realm of television and animation, where language transcends mere words. In the realm of television and animation, language encompasses a myriad of communication forms such as visuals, movement, and sound. Just as in broader human communication, the intricacies of language in this context include speaking, writing, drawing, filming, and more. Every frame, every scene, is laden with meaning, creating a complex interplay between the material and the symbolic in the social landscape of television and animation. (Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujjar 2018:5)

Researchers delving into discourse, communication, communicative practice, interaction, literature, or semiosis within this domain are fundamentally studying the language of the visual and auditory. Sociology, geography, and anthropology, while providing valuable insights into social transformations, often overlook the linguistic dimensions of these changes

within the dynamic world of television and animation. Yet, the significance of communicative and symbolic practices cannot be understated, as language emerges as a crucial resource with profound implications in the realm of visual storytelling (Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujolar 2018:6).

My research question is about how the theme of fatherhood and motherhood is portrayed in the Japanese popular media franchise Mobile Suit Gundam created by Yoshiyuki Tomino. I have focused on the original Mobile Suit Gundam (Tomino, 1979) as a baseline starting point for the world and the themes, Mobile Suit Gundam F91 (Tomino, 1991) and Mobile Suit Victory Gundam (Tomino, 1993). The early 90s was a period when massive sociological changes such as the collapse of the Japanese bubble economy happened. This had a huge effect on everyone but especially on women who came into the workforce in large numbers during the 1980s (Motonobu, 2004:70). The way in which working mothers affect the growth of their children is a prominent plot point in the series which I have analyzed. For this paper, I have opted for a qualitative content-based analysis as the chosen analytical method.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 TV, Film and Animation

TV series can be classified into sequential and integrative genres (Aaltonen, 2018:174). Sequential genres focus on the disruption and restoration of order in society, with a target audience of men. Integrative genres center around the formation of couples and families, targeting women. Typically, episodic series have self-contained episodes with different plot lines, while serials have ongoing storylines. Each episode usually has multiple plot lines, with the main story, emotional plots, and comedic plots complementing each other. Continuity in the series is based on the characters and their family situations, with plot lines extending from episode to episode. Semi-serial series combine continuous and episodic elements, with a broader continuous plot and episodic endings. They may also include shorter plots of several episodes in length and filler episodes with one-episode plots. Flexi-narratives are another term for semi-serial series and can be replaced by the term seasonal series, which consist of season-long continuation plots and episodic plots (Aaltonen, 2018:174). I don't believe these qualifications and definitions are as clear cut and rigid as they are portrayed here. However, they can be used as a basis for trying to differentiate between different kinds of storytelling structures. The rigid differentiation between series aimed at a male or female audience shouldn't be taken at face value either. This applies to Tomino's works which have an episodic structure with an overarching plot, character arcs and themes. While the primary demographic for Tomino's shows and movies are boys and young men there has always been a sizable female fanbase for his works as well (Onda, 2019).

A film's theme is its core message, sparking audience debate and determining its success. Screenwriters, often drawn to themes like justice, freedom, and family values, may face studio resistance due to fear of alienating viewers (Lucey, 1996:57). Despite this,

controversial themes can add depth and drama to stories. Thematic content is subtly woven into a film through dialogue or visuals, serving as a social observation by the writer or director. While some themes, like "crime doesn't pay," may be uncontroversial, addressing issues such as racism or social injustice can be deemed less entertaining by censors. Authors navigate potential criticism by embedding their thematic statements deeply, allowing the message to surface only after the film concludes. Screenwriters aim to avoid using scripts as platforms for propaganda, allowing audiences to reflect on the film and derive its message independently (Lucey, 1996:58).

A theme is expressed by repeating similar stories and moments. The theme can be expressed either by comparing characters and stories, which creates coherence, or by creating contrast, which can be used to show contrasts. By comparing stories, the writer can show how elements that seem different on a surface level are actually the same thing on a deeper level (Vacklin & Rosenvall, 2015:245).

There are many different angles to approach media analysis for this paper the emphasis is on the director. To study media effectively, it's crucial to analyze both the author's background and intentions, gaining insights into their perspective and the social context. Examining the author's life can explain elements in their work, addressing the potential mismatch between intentions and interpretations (Bacon, 2000:212). While acknowledging the importance of the artist-centered approach, it's vital to recognize the limitations. Texts inherently carry multiple interpretations, extending beyond the author's control. The work-centered approach, exemplified by neo-criticism in the 1940s and 1950s, focuses on the text's intrinsic qualities, independent of the author's intentions. In conclusion, a comprehensive study of media involves considering the author's background, intentions, the work itself, and the reception process. Despite the valuable insights from the author's perspective, the recognition of diverse interpretations beyond their control is essential. Different approaches, such as artist-centered or work-centered, provide varied perspectives for researching and understanding art (Bacon, 2000:215).

Similar research has been done on anime movies, specifically ones made by the other Japanese culture award winner Hayao Miyazaki, in relation to war-related themes (Viljanen, 2023:4-6) while utilizing a combination of linguistic and visual analysis methods. More focus

has also been placed on the female characters in Miyazaki's movies (Perttunen, 2020:8-10). This particular research made a point about the fact that feminine traits could be present in male character and vice versa. Something that Tomino himself has also brought up in relation to paternity and maternity (Tomino, 2011:107). The organizational power relations between men and women is also something that is important especially in the case of my analysis of Mobile Suit Victory Gundam. Viljanen brings up the idea of comparing her study of Miyazaki's women with the representations of Disney characters for example. The way in which children develop their understanding of gender roles can be affected by viewing media such as Disney films has been studied (Coyne et al, 2016:1921-1922). The results supported this hypothesis for girls that such engagement would be associated with higher levels of female gender-stereotypical behavior both concurrently and in the long term. The study emphasized that while expressing femininity or engaging in gendered behavior is not inherently problematic, high levels of stereotypical female behavior could pose challenges. This includes potential limitations on girls' perceived life opportunities and the avoidance of exploration and activities important for learning. This study also showed that Disney Princesses are not exclusively popular with girls, as many preschool boys also watch these programs. Boys may learn gender stereotypes from female heroines, and their play behaviors might be influenced accordingly. As previously mentioned, the primary demographic for Tomino's shows and movies are boys and young men but there has always been a sizable female fanbase for his works as well (Onda, 2019). This is another reason why this sort of analysis has merit. The way in which female characters struggle in male-dominated spaces such as the military is also a large part of Tomino's works.

Prior research on media consumption relating to the formation of gender development and differentiation has also focused on this aspect of power relations between men and women (Bussey, Bandura, 1999:696). The research underscored the profound impact of societal values on children's self-concept and behavior concerning gender roles. Boys are inclined to align themselves with the positive societal valuation of their gender, while girls, acutely aware of societal differences in the treatment of male and female roles, may endeavor to enhance their status by adopting traditionally masculine activities. Notably, this inclination is observable even during the preschool years, where girls exhibit a greater tendency to model behaviors associated with the opposite gender compared to boys. Additionally, the research went into the gender modeling of aggression, a trait traditionally associated with maleness.

Boys show a heightened inclination for aggressive modeling, influenced by societal norms, while girls may adopt such behavior if provided with incentives.

2.2 The process of creating anime

The reason why I am adamant that this artist centered approach is appropriate is because of the many testimonies from the other people working alongside him as well as the many roles Tomino has been in with regards to his works. These roles include series director, scriptwriter, storyboarder, character design etc. The series director holds a pivotal role in overseeing the entire production, functioning as both the primary creative decision-maker and the ultimate supervisor, outranking all other staff members and possessing the final authority in decision-making.

The series composition is a critical responsibility entrusted to the primary writer of the series. Despite technically being subordinate to the director, they collaborate during pre-production with occasional involvement from producers to conceptualize the series, establish major plot points, and determine its overall pacing. It's important to note that this role differs from individual episode scriptwriters who typically have limited creative input, primarily developing existing drafts. Series composers, however, do also engage in scriptwriting themselves.

Complementing these roles is the storyboard, akin to the blueprints of animation. These visual scripts consist of simple drawings on specialized sheets, featuring fields for animation cut numbers, staff notes, and corresponding lines of dialogue, essentially serving as the foundational framework for the anime.

In the creation of animation, the storyboard is arguably the most important component. Tomino suggests that by examining the storyboards, one can gauge the anticipated quality of the final film at approximately up to 80%. The quality of the storyboard significantly influences the overall episode or film, irrespective of the excellence of other aspects in the production process (Tomino, 1991:220). Imperfections in the script prompt almost automatic revisions during the storyboarding phase. While the written scenario serves as a crucial tool in film production, offering the conceptual framework and philosophical essence of the story, it essentially represents only the written manifestation of the thought process.

The character designer and animation director of Mobile Suit Gundam, Yasuhiko Yoshikazu, shares the same sentiment. According to him it's crucial to inspect both the storyboards and original drawings. He says that about 80% to 90% of the work is determined by the storyboards. "Therefore, it cannot be left up to others." (Yasuhiko, 2016:46-47).

2.3 Yoshiyuki Tomino as a Director

In his long career Yoshiyuki Tomino has worked on over 100 different anime and has directed or storyboarded more than 1100 episodes (Kaito, 2017).

Heavy Metal L-Gaim (Tomino, 1984) and Overman King Gainer (Tomino, 2002) are the only Tomino series to have a series composition credit; Yuji Watanabe for Heavy Metal L-Gaim and Ichiro Okouchi for Overman King Gainer. However, when looking at Okouchi scripts next to Tomino's storyboards side by side they were completely different (Watzky, 2023). Okouchi himself even said after having watched the episode he had written as if it were done by someone else (Tomino, 2002). Similarly for Turn A Gundam (Tomino, 1999) according to producer Tomioka, Tomino revised approximately 70% of the scripts, whether directly or in the storyboard drawing process. And there are no post-process script revisions. The storyboard becomes the final version of the story (Feez, 2023).

Aside from the previous two series, Tomino holds both the director and main writer roles. In an interview going over his series in 2022 he said that both of those series were failures due to him letting the team have as much input as they did (Sunrise, 2022). In other words, a ship should only have a single captain. Contrasting this in the same interview however, he says that the reason why Wings of Rean (Tomino, 2005) was a failure was because he didn't communicate with his team enough.

Sadayo Fujino, the sound director on Tomino's projects from 1982 to 1988 said;

“He's a director of all aspects. It's normal for a director to do slight corrections to storyboards. Drawing all the storyboards by oneself is not possible, but let's say that there was a rotation of six storyboard artists, Tomino would still read through all of those storyboards. Depending on the person he would redraw up to 80% of the storyboards by himself. It may be rude to other people for me to say this but even if many people are drawing it in the end it becomes Tomino's work:” (Asanuma, 2022)

Yoshie Kawahara was a scriptwriter on Heavy Metal L-Gaim. Her first draft of the script for episode 20 was accepted without any revisions but when she saw the episode it had been

completely rewritten in the storyboarding phase. The storyboards for the episode are credited to Toshifumi Takizawa but Kawahara says this was done by Tomino. This makes perfect sense since there is no way a storyboarder could completely disregard an episode's script and come up with something on their own. This is also an example of Tomino doing work while remaining uncredited, leaving credit to the other members of the team even if their work was not used (Watanabe & Kawahara, 2017:14-16).

One of the two main scriptwriters on Zeta Gundam, Akinori Endo, describes the scriptwriting process as follows:

“First, there were Director Tomino's liner notes. Based on those, the scriptwriter would create a structure (plot). We'd have a meeting with Director Tomino about the plot we'd made, receive various criticisms and instructions, and then start working on the actual script. The script would be rewritten from a first draft to a second draft, and maybe a third draft depending on the situation. Once it was fairly complete, Director Tomino would take over. That was how we went about it.” (Endo, 2005:34-36).

The other main writer, Yumiko Suzuki, describes the process in similar terms in the Z Memorial Box set:

“In the case of Z, though I was called a scriptwriter, I think it would be more accurate to say that I adapted the stories that Mr. Tomino thought up. At any rate, my job was to figure out how to manifest Mr. Tomino's world. First I'd receive the story, then I'd adapt it, and then the director would take over.” (Tomino, 2008)

With the bursting of Japan's bubble economy in early 1992, Victory Gundam presumably faced tighter financial constraints than the previous installments in the series, but there were additional reasons for the simple visual style it ultimately adopted. Koichi Inoue of the Sunrise planning office, credited on the series as script manager, discusses some of these in the DVD Memorial Box:

“Following the theatrical Mobile Suit Gundam F91 and the OVA Mobile Suit Gundam 0083, Mobile Suit V Gundam was planned as the first TV series in six years. Since this TV series was following afterwards, it was important we find a way to give it a new appeal distinct from them. That was our intention in giving the characters a soft but substantial presence, like the so-called "Masterpiece" series. That's also one reason why there was almost no shading in the early part of the series, even though there was a tendency at the time to take onscreen shading as a given. It was produced via a process where shading was added only to the cuts where we really wanted it, as specified by Director Tomino.” (Tomino, 2004)

Another trademark aspect of Tomino’s works is “Tominobushi” (Tomino’s melody). This is a term created by fans which refers to the characteristic way of speaking that all the characters in Tomino’s series exhibit. This is something easily noticeable across all of his works. This is also extremely noticeable in the movie Mobile Suit Gundam Cucuruz Doan’s Island (Yasuhiko, 2022). The movie was directed by Yasuhiko Yoshikazu, the character designer and lead animator on the original Mobile Suit Gundam (Tomino, 1979). The movie is a remake of the 15th episode of that series. However, Tomino did not participate in any way in the creation of this movie. While the movie has its own story, the end is still the same as in the episode. When the story reaches that point all of the characters start suddenly talking differently than they have up until that point in an extremely jarring way now that they are back to using the original dialogue.

2.4 The world of the Universal Century

The world that Yoshiyuki Tomino's Gundam series take place in is called the Universal Century. The Universal Century takes place in a future where mankind came together to create a unified Earth Federation government which rules over all of humanity. The reason for this act was to stop the ecological destruction of the planet which gave life to humanity. In order to accomplish this the Federation built orbiting space colonies around the Earth and the Moon in order to transfer the excess population to live in space. The original purpose of this plan was to send all of humanity into space but many, mostly the privileged classes, stayed on Earth. The failure to follow through with this plan could be said to be the original sin of the Universal Century from which all the later conflicts arise.

Once the process of sending people to live in space began the Universal Century calendar came into usage. Thus, the first Mobile Suit Gundam takes place in UC0079, meaning it is the 79th year since immigration to the space colonies began. Mobile Suit Gundam F91 takes place in UC0123 and Mobile Suit Victory Gundam takes place in UC0153. As such none of the three stories this paper focuses on share any recurring characters. The only organization that is present in all of these stories is the Earth Federation government.

The basic structure of almost all of Yoshiyuki Tomino's works include a group of characters who are not familiar with each other aboard a ship of some kind. These characters are mainly children and teenagers though there are also some adults in smaller roles. The main focus is on the younger characters.

The series under analysis have a larger narrative which continues from the beginning to the end, while also including shorter multi-episode story arcs with recurring side characters. However, the tv series do still aim for each episode to work as its own standalone story. The way in which this is accomplished is by sticking to a repeatable formula which still leaves room for the plot and characters to develop. The episode-by-episode structure always includes some unifying things. One of these things is that at least a single battle between the protagonists and antagonists will occur each time, usually at the end of the episode. In this

manner the first half of the episode will likely focus on character drama, which will likely play a role alongside the battle and after the battle is over there is a short coda which brings the character conflict from the beginning to a close.

A central concept in the Gundam franchise is the existence of people referred to as Newtypes. Newtypes are individuals who have reached a higher stage of human evolution by living in space. They possess unique abilities such as heightened intuition, enhanced spatial awareness, and telepathic communication. The concept behind Newtypes is that in the vastness of space, humans adapt and evolve to better understand and navigate their surroundings. Newtypes are often depicted as having an increased understanding of human emotions, enabling them to sense the intentions of others and even being able to predict enemy movements. These special abilities make Newtypes ace pilots. However, Newtypes are a nebulous concept. Their origin comes from a philosophical theory created by Zeon Zum Deikun, the father of the main antagonist of Mobile Suit Gundam, Char Aznable. Importantly Zeon Zum Deikun created this theory of an evolved mankind living in space years before any people with special powers emerged. He also died before the events of the story. Thus, his concept was retroactively placed upon these people with extrasensory capabilities.

The Newtype ideology is intentionally nebulous and many different characters in the series interpret it differently to suit their own ends whether they be good or bad. In short, they are meant to be a better version of humanity that is able to guide the human race towards a better future but this is not always the case. The protagonists of the series all eventually awaken to their potential as Newtypes in conjunction with the piloting of giant robots called mobile suits..

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

As previously stated, I have focused my analysis on three different works in the Mobile Suit Gundam franchise; Mobile Suit Gundam, Mobile Suit Gundam F91 and Mobile Suit Victory Gundam. Mobile Suit Gundam is a 43-episode tv series, F91 is a two hour movie and Victory is a 51-episode tv series.

The goal of content-based analysis is to construct a theoretical framework from the research material. Essentially, this approach can be applied to various forms of text, such as books, speeches, drawings, or, in this instance, a television series. In conducting content analysis, two primary methods exist: inductive and deductive. Inductive analysis seeks to uncover new insights without predetermined notions, while deductive analysis is more focused on addressing specific pre-planned research questions (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009:48). This paper concentrates on using the latter method to analyze how motherhood and fatherhood are represented in Yoshiyuki Tomino's Mobile Suit Gundam franchise.

In content analysis, the research material serves to depict the studied phenomenon, with the analysis aiming to generate a clear description of this phenomenon. The objective is to organize the material in a concise and lucid format without sacrificing its inherent information. The purpose of analyzing qualitative data is to enhance the value of information, aiming to create meaningful, clear, and consistent insights into the studied phenomenon from dispersed data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009:93-94).

This is accomplished by meticulously examining the research material, identifying relevant findings that correlate with the research question, condensing them into a succinct form, and then grouping these findings to construct a cohesive framework of the analyzed data. The ultimate goal is to convey this information optimally. Through this systematic process, it becomes feasible to draw broader conclusions about the researched materials (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2009:102).

Aside from the primary subject of analysis being the works themselves I have also read, compiled and analyzed topics that the director has provided in his many interviews and essays throughout the years. While the main topic of discussion in these interviews is of course promotional in nature, director Tomino is known to talk about many different topics from history, modern politics, science and modern popular figures like politicians. Because of this, these interviews can provide a greater perspective into the ideas and preconceptions that the creatives behind the stories and characters are. Adopting a chronological way of researching these series can also pinpoint where certain patterns emerge (Hellen, Pietikäinen & Pujolar 2018: 17)

After watching all of the selected series at least once I have focused on recurring elements related to the roles of men and women, fathers and mothers. What I did then was to write down all the thematically relevant plot details from these series and condensed them to a simpler and more focused view of the events while also leaving the irrelevant details of the plots out of the text. Primary focus was given to recurring negative traits shown in the cast of adult characters. I also tried to make sure that any names or terms used in these series were kept to a minimum in order to not confuse the reader. However, when truly important names and/or terms are brought up I have made sure to explain them in a way that is easy to understand and does not get bogged down in the minutiae of the fiction (Heller, Pietikäinen & Pujolar 2018: 140)

I did my best to make the vast amount of information easily understandable both to readers who are already familiar with the subject material but even more importantly to those who have no prior knowledge about the subject. The findings are presented in as neutral a manner as possible and there is no judgment passed on the way the characters are portrayed. How the reader will take the information can be left to themselves. Even for a very popular series like this with fans all over the world making analysis like this can still be worthwhile on its own as well as a springboard for further research for myself or for other researchers.

4. ANALYSIS

The first section of this analysis is about a common aspect in these three works as well as in Yoshiyuki Tomino's larger filmography in regards to the Earth and its thematic and symbolic meaning. After this I have chosen to use the piece of analysis on Mobile Suit Gundam as a basis for the analysis in F91 and Victory. All three series have a common element in that the giant robots that the protagonists pilot were all created by their parents; Amuro's father in MSG, and Seabook's and Uso's mothers in F91 and Victory respectively. Because of this I have given more focus on this one aspect in the analysis of Mobile Suit Gundam. The analysis on F91 is then used to contrast the ideas brought up in the relationship between parent and child. The third piece of analysis on Mobile Suit Victory Gundam is the most sprawling as the themes are more all-encompassing, with multiple different characters in fatherly and especially in motherly roles.

4.1 Mother Earth

In the original Mobile Suit Gundam, the protagonist Amuro Ray lives in space with his father Tem Ray. Amuro's mother Kamaria did not want to leave Earth and so she was separated from her son while he was still very young. While there is no definite reason for this separation there are hints that Kamaria was having an affair with another man and this worked as an excuse for Kamaria and Tem to separate.

When Amuro is reunited with his mother on Earth in episode 13 Coming Home, they are separated once more. While Kamaria is trying to help wounded people in a medical tent, two Zeon soldiers come to inspect them while Amuro is wearing a Federation uniform. In order to protect himself Amuro ends up shooting one of the soldiers while the other runs away from Amuro. Kamaria is horrified by what her son has become and pleads for him to turn back to the way he was as a child, claiming that she had not raised him to act this way and wondering if he is like this because he was raised by his father. Disregarding the circumstances of the war which Amuro had no choice but to get involved in, Kamaria had not raised Amuro in any way because she had essentially abandoned him. There is a recurring motif in the episode of a wooden Pinocchio-esque doll that Amuro picks up from their home. The doll which Amuro used to play with as a child has not changed in the years after he left but of course he himself is a real boy who has grown up and changed. At the end of the episode instead of saying goodbye as a son Amuro gives Kamaria a military salute before boarding the White Base ship which lifts up towards the sky.

Arguably the most important father in Gundam is the father of the antagonist and most important character; Char Aznable. His spacenoid father, Zeon Zum Deikun, was a political leader and philosopher who was assassinated prior to the events of the main story. The greatest contribution of Deikun was his invention of the idea of Newtypes. Newtype refers to many different things in the Gundam world but in simple terms it mostly means people who came to live in space, gaining a higher level of consciousness. This ideology gets morphed in different ways by different factions, but at its core it is more of a philosophical idea, although

it is also linked to people who later end up developing supernatural abilities. A phrase related to this concept appears in the sequel series *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam* (Tomino, 1985). The phrase ‘people whose souls are weighed down by gravity’ is mostly used when discussing the people living on Earth but it also encompasses everyone who is obsessed with the Earth in one way or another.

So, this dichotomy already exists in the original series with motherhood, Kamaria, being a presence, which coddles a person and does not allow them to change or grow being tied to the Earth whereas space is linked with fatherhood through; Tem, Deikun and the Newtype idea.

Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam, set seven years after the previous series, depicts the civil war between the radicalized conservative faction of the Federation Forces, the Titans, and the liberal group of soldiers, AEUG, from the perspective of the new protagonist, Kamille Bidan. He has a complex about having a woman’s name which results in him being bullied for it. This is only one of the reasons why Kamille hates his distant parents. When Kamille descends to Earth in the second part of the show he comes across Four Murasame, an artificial Newtype, who has had her memories removed by the Titans in order to turn her into a weapon. Four Murasame is a girl with no past. Due to her enhancement, she has lost her own past memories and even her real name. The reason she fights is because she believes it can bring back her past memories. She has nothing, and she desperately yearns for her memories, her past. In that sense, she is a character who lives for her past.

The past of living with the name Kamille is a complex for him, and he would like to deny it and throw it away if possible. This also includes the complicated home environment with his parents. Kamille runs away to space with the stolen Gundam Mk-2, which was made by his father, Franklin, which symbolically ties him to his parents, in episode 2 without having a plan as to what he is going to do. He is a future-oriented character who can only see the future. This is why the budding romantic relationship in episode 19 between Kamille, who lives in the future and Four, who lives in the past doesn't work out. Kamille tries to persuade her that if she comes to space with him, she can regain her memory. Of course, there is no guarantee of that, but Kamille believes in the future. However, Four, who is obsessed with the past, cannot believe the baseless future that Kamille talks about. In other words, the relationship between these two is structured as; Space being synonymous with the future

which is synonymous with Kamille vs the Earth being synonymous with the past which is synonymous with Four.

When looking at Kamille at this point as a symbolic character not only the encounter with Four, but the whole Earth arc could be said to be a confrontation with the past. Kamille descends to Earth in Episode 11, more specifically to Jaburo. Jaburo is a symbolic place of the past that appeared in the previous work *Mobile Suit Gundam*. In the past it was an important base that Amuro and others desperately protected, but in *Zeta*, Kamille and the others are on the attacking side. There Kamille rescues Kai Shiden, one of Amuro's old comrades from the White Base crew. This is his first encounter with the past. Then, starting with Kai Shiden, he meets the other people from *Mobile Suit Gundam*. Hayato, Katz, Amuro and Mirai. This culminates with the encounter with Four Murasame in Hong Kong, a girl who lives in the past.

At the end Kamille tells Four about his past, which was his complex, and finally accepts his own name (his past) after her approval. In this moment Kamille is kneeling on Four's lap like a child on a mother's lap while Kamille's Gundam is being cradled by Four's Psycho Gundam, which due to its gigantic size looks like an adult cradling a child. If this Earth arc itself is a "confrontation with the past" arc, the climax is Kamille confronting his own past and accepting it. And the one who made it possible was a girl who didn't have a name to dislike in the first place and had no memory of her past. Thanks to the existence of Four, who can unconditionally affirm that the past and memories are wonderful, Kamille was able to overcome the past and return to space. After Kamille returns to space he obtains the new *Zeta Gundam*, which he helped design. When Kamille returns to Earth in episode 35, Four is still stuck piloting the Psycho Gundam just like she was back in Hong Kong.

The same pattern of the protagonists being young people who live in space but who descend to Earth in the midpoint of the story before returning back to the space for the third act is present in *Mobile Suit Gundam*, *Mobile Suit Z Gundam* and *Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ* (Tomino, 1986). In the finale to the original story involving Amuro Ray and Char Aznable, the movie *Mobile Suit Gundam: Char's Counterattack* (Tomino, 1988) Char plans to drop an asteroid on Earth to create a nuclear winter, which would force all of humanity to leave the planet to live in space. This is in part to force humanity to become Newtypes per his father

Zeon Zum Deikun's idea. In the climax of the story Char reveals that his goals are tied to a mother complex. In this way his goal to destroy the Earth could be seen as a symbolic way to strike at "Mother" Earth. Similarly to the original Mobile Suit Gundam while the battle is taking place in space there are scenes on Earth with Captain Bright's wife Mirai who is also the mother of Hathaway, Bright's son who is fighting alongside Amuro against Char. So, just like Kamaria was symbolically tied with the Earth in the original, now Mirai is tied with the Earth in Char's Counterattack.

However, the next installment after Char's Counterattack is Mobile Suit Gundam F91. This is a story which according to director Tomino is about paternity unleashed (Tomino, 2011:52). F91 is the first Gundam story which begins and ends in space and the characters never visit the Earth. In the following installment, Mobile Suit Victory Gundam, for the first time the main characters are Earthborn people who are living in Eastern Europe. In a reversal of the previous series structure the story begins and ends on Earth. And as I outline in my larger analysis of Victory Gundam this makes perfect sense as Victory is contrasting F91 in the sense that it is a series where maternity has completely overpowered paternity.

Outside of the Gundam series in Overman King Gainer (Tomino, 2002) the characters fight against each other with giant organic robots called Overmen. The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic future where a large group of people are on a journey called an Exodus from Siberia to Yapan (Japan). On their journey they are fighting against the Siberian Railway Company. The process of the Exodus has a long tradition around the world and the originator of this movement is a woman called Early Meeya. In the midpoint of the story the main characters come across an ancient ruin where they find Early Meeya's Overman. All of the Overman have special abilities like turning invisible or being able to read peoples' minds etc. Similar to the phallic shaped space laser "Keilas Guilie" which appears in Victory Gundam, which was designed by Tomino himself (Kawaguchi, 2006), Early Meeya's Overman resembles a female sex organ in its design. This design was also drawn by Tomino himself (Fujitsu, 2003:129). This Overman's special skill is the ability to control gravity. So, the aspects which were linked in Gundam are further reinforced here; Early Meeya is the 'mother' of the Exodus movement, her Overman's design is based on female anatomy and the special skill is similar to the concept of the Earth's gravity.

4.2 Parent and child in Mobile Suit Gundam

Tem Ray is the father of Amuro Ray, the protagonist of Mobile Suit Gundam.

He is a technical officer in the Earth Federation Forces, with the rank of captain. He is the father of the main character Amuro Ray. His wife is Kamaria Ray who is living on Earth separated from Amuro and himself. Tem Ray is a central figure in the design of the mobile suit Gundam. He was originally a space colony's architectural engineer and he transferred to the military when the One Year War broke out.

Significantly involved in the Gundam's design, Tem Ray engineered the mobile suit that Amuro pilots, though not with his son specifically in mind. In the inaugural episode of Mobile Suit Gundam, Tem articulates his intentions to Bright Noah, a young federal officer, emphasizing the desire for the Gundam to expedite the war's conclusion, sparing the younger generation from battle. This motive is underscored by a photograph of Amuro on Tem's work desk, revealing a paternal affection.

Tem Ray expresses aversion to the grim reality of youths, akin to his son, being thrust into battlefield roles. This sentiment reflects a commendable adult sensibility. As an accomplished engineer, Tem channels his enthusiasm into leveraging technology for warfare, aiming to reshape the battlefield and hasten the war's end. However, his perspective is somewhat short-sighted, focusing on the introduction of a new weapon as a simplistic means to secure victory and peace for the Earth Federation military. This approach neglects the nuanced political complexities that precipitated the war. While not a flaw in his engineering prowess, Tem's macroscopic viewpoint stands in contrast to Amuro's more comprehensive understanding, highlighting a difference in their perspectives.

Taking a broad view of Tem Ray's endeavors, one could argue that he played a role in diminishing overall casualties during the One Year War when examined through a statistical lens. Perhaps the toll on young lives, whether aligned with Zeon or the Federation, saw a marginal reduction—aligning with Tem's aspirations. Yet, these reductions are mere

numerical abstractions, and Tem may not have contemplated the grim realities that unfold each time the Gundam takes center stage on the battlefield. Moreover, he likely never envisioned the prospect of his own son being conscripted as a child soldier, piloting the Gundam, engaging in combat, and taking lives until the war's conclusion.

Therefore, the following three points exist in parallel within Tem Ray's mind. His beloved son Amuro, the reality that children of the same generation as his son are fighting on the battlefields and that the Gundam he is creating will end the war. However, all of the previous points are disconnected from one another. While not much time is spent with Tem it seems that he probably had not even considered such a possibility. But ironically, Mobile Suit Gundam is a story that connects all three ideas. In other words, his beloved son Amuro will enter the battlefield with the Gundam and will keep on fighting until the very end of the war.

In the first episode of Mobile Suit Gundam, Amuro gets into the Gundam built by his father, which seems to happen by chance. Just before that, Amuro and Tem Ray, who are both heading towards the Gundam end up meeting each other. This is the first episode, and the first meeting between father and son in the story. Their next meeting will actually be much later on in episode 33. Tem is using an elevator to move the Gundam away from the enemies while evacuees are also in need of the elevator. At this point, Amuro accuses Tem while saying, "Are mobile suits more important than humans?" Tem Ray is consistent because he sees a large number of people who can be saved with the Gundam. He is not a cold-blooded person. This, of course, is in contrast to Amuro, who sees people die, sends his friend Fraw Bow into the harbor, and runs in the opposite direction, wiping away his tears. The reason Amuro gets into the Gundam in the first episode is for people close to him, who Tem isn't able to consider.

After this, Amuro gets into the Gundam and defeats two Zeon Zaku mobile suits in the first battle. Tem Ray doesn't know that Amuro, who is an amateur, is riding a Gundam, so he is angry at the Gundam's poor fighting style. When Amuro defeats the first Zaku the resulting explosion leads to Tem being sucked through a hole in the space colony and thrown into space. When he returns in episode 33, he is disabled due to oxygen deprivation. In a way this is a sort of death for the character. Neither Amuro nor Tem is aware of the other's participation in this sequence of events. The first victory over the enemy Zaku coincides with

the main character Amuro inadvertently 'killing' his own father, the creator of the Gundam. In terms of Tem's role in the narrative, since the Gundam is in Amuro's hands now, there is no need for him in the plot anymore. However, the loss of the father is not even used as motivation for the protagonist.

On the contrary, it is frightening that it is used as an example to convey in the first episode the crisis unique to the Universal Century and the tragedy that results from a hole in a space colony. It is dramatically more effective if not only unnamed background characters but also an important named character who is even responsible for the development of Gundam are lost in an instant. The enemy Zaku is not the cause of this accident, rather it's because of Amuro's poor operation of the Gundam for the first time. In other words, the story development of the strength of the titular robot Gundam combined with the immaturity of Amuro result in creating a hole in the colony. The first machine that explodes due to Amuro's immaturity. Amuro defeats the second Zaku by only penetrating the cockpit, which in turn shows off Amuro's extraordinary skills. Amuro destroyed two Zakus in a rush and fixed the problem with the second one. However, the penalty given for that one failure is merciless.

Tem, who didn't care about the people in front of him, including Amuro, and only focused on things on a macro scale, and Amuro who impulsively rode the Gundam just for the people in front of him. This is almost like a punishment for both sides. Afterwards the story progresses without anyone caring about Tem, including Amuro and Fraw, who knew him, and Bright who had a conversation with him just before this accident. As if that person never existed in the first place.

In episode 33, titled "Conscon's Assault," Amuro encounters his long-lost father, Tem, within a Neutral Colony on Side 6. Surprisingly, despite their reunion, there is minimal interaction between Amuro and Tem, who hasn't been seen since the first episode. While exploring Side 6, Amuro spots an individual bearing a striking resemblance to his father and decides to follow him. Wearing the Federation Forces uniform, Amuro catches Tem's attention, prompting Tem, a former Federation Forces member, to inquire about the Gundam's functionality, assuming Amuro is a pilot.

However, as mentioned previously, Tem should have been thrown into space without knowing who boarded the Gundam. Of course, the viewers know who the Gundam pilots are, but the general public in the story are not privy to this information. Tem is a former military member, but in many ways he has now transitioned into civilian life.

However, Tem talks about Amuro as a Gundam pilot as if it were a matter of course. However, based on Tem's own situation, contrary to his child's expectations, it is bizarre that he only recognizes the son he met again after a long time as a Gundam pilot. Not only is the opportunity of both of them telling each other about what they have gone through entirely omitted from the story, but that omission in itself is cruel to Amuro. The father and son are no longer in a state to have such meaningful conversations. Tem guides Amuro to the second floor of the junk shop where he currently lives. There Tem gives a supposedly great upgrade for the Gundam which Amuro immediately realizes is just trash. This is where Amuro realizes the bizarre way that Tem is behaving must be a result of him having suffered oxygen deprivation. After this Amuro throws away the parts that Tem gave him and says farewell to his father for good.

What if Tem Ray was the same when he reunited with Amuro in Side 6? As the one who developed the Gundam, would he have been proud of Amuro, who fought through the harsh battlefield with the Gundam? Or would he have regretted making mobile suits which made it so that children could participate in the war?

4.3 Mobile Suit Gundam F91

The story takes place in the year 0123 of the Universal Century, several decades after the events of the original Mobile Suit Gundam series. The Earth Federation has weakened, leading to the rise of the Crossbone Vanguard, a powerful militaristic force led by the villainous Iron Mask. Amidst this turmoil, the protagonist, Seabook Arno, is living a peaceful life in the space colony Frontier IV. When the Crossbone Vanguard attacks the colony during a school festival Seabook and his friends find themselves caught in the crossfire. One of the purposes of this attack was the capture of Seabook's friend and crush; Cecily Fairchild (birth name Berah Ronah), the daughter of Iron Mask. Seabook eventually discovers the F91 Gundam, a powerful mobile suit developed by his estranged mother, Monica Arno, which he uses to fight against the Crossbone Vanguard and to save Cecily from her family.

The patriarch of the Crossbone Vanguard is Meitzer Ronah, a divorced man who bought the family name of a fallen aristocrat and named himself a nobleman in order to rehabilitate the world. His son-in-law, Carozzo Ronah (Iron Mask), is acting in line with that intention. Nadia, the daughter of Meitzer and the wife of Carozzo, who is disillusioned with her father and husband, leaves with their young daughter Cecily. As a character, Iron Mask tries to enact justice in his own way, separating good from evil based on Meitzer's philosophy alongside the Crossbone Vanguard military. Iron Mask tries to divide the world based on the logic of paternity alone, cutting off the accepting maternal mentality. When Iron Mask is confronted by Nadia in the second act of the movie, he tells her that the reason he wears the mask is to contain his emotions, which includes beating her to death, in order to lead the world to a better place. The scene ends with Iron Mask killing Nadia's new husband, Theo Fairchild, despite telling Nadia that he has forgiven Theo. However, what would have been only a "theory" when Meitzer was talking about his ideas, becomes a catastrophe the moment Iron Mask tries to make his ideas a reality. This is because protecting the bloodline, which is at the heart of paternity, and obeying strict rules, are not the only things that are important. In this manner Iron Mask symbolizes the logic of fatherhood that has gone out of control. When attacked by Cecily in the climax of the movie, he shouts, "Women are so hard to manage,

why is that?" This is the line of a miserable father who has been betrayed by his wife and defied by his daughter.

While involved in the development of the weapon Gundam, Tem Ray could not imagine his beloved child being involved with these weapons. Ironically, his son Amuro Ray, shows off his talents and ends up fighting with his father's Gundam.

This composition is reproduced in Mobile Suit Gundam F91. The Gundam in this work, the titular F91, was created by Monica Arno, the mother of the main character Seabook. Monica is also a talented engineer, just like Tem Ray. However, she is dismayed when she learns that the Gundam F91, which she helped develop, is being used on the battlefield by her son Seabook. In response to this, the mechanic chief aboard the White Ark, immediately remarks; "Then what is it, Madam, are you saying that you don't mind if someone other than your child fights and dies?" In other words, Monica, like Tem, was developing her own weapons, but someone else's son would get into the cockpit and end up killing other people.

It's natural that a parent would be upset if they heard that their children were unintentionally participating in the war while they were absorbed in the development of weapons as a job. Even if their reasoning is selfish regarding their own child being an exception and not wanting them to have to kill someone. However, there is a difference in the way that both Tem and Monica were involved in the creation of their respective Gundams. Even though the ultimate goal was to save lives by ending the war as soon as possible Tem was still creating a weapon which would be used to kill people whereas Monica's true goal is the development of the F91's biocomputer which would be used outside of combat. Unfortunately, the only way for her to do her research is through the military's funding in weapons development.

In the climactic showdown where Seabook and Cecily confront Iron Mask, a pivotal moment unfolds as Cecily is cast into the vastness of outer space by her own father. Before ascending to the role of Crossbone Vanguard's commander, Carozzo, once a researcher delving into biocomputers akin to Monica, undergoes a transformation into the mechanized Iron Mask. This reversal from the Mobile Suit Gundam narrative sees Carozzo, now Iron Mask, discarding life into the cosmic void, contrasting with the original storyline where the child exiles the parent into space.

At the end of the movie after the credits have rolled, the face of the Gundam F91 and Iron Mask are overlapped. Just like in the original Mobile Suit Gundam both 'machines' end up throwing their family members to the darkness of space. After defeating Iron Mask, Seabook rushes to find Cecily, but his mother Monica proposes to search for life, Cecily, floating in space by combining the Gundam's biosensors with her son Seabook's Newtype senses.

This is a drastic difference from the way in which Newtypes have been used thus far in a narrative sense. Leaving the mother behind and becoming a Newtype has been the way that the previous stories have structured the series and the journey of the main character. The fact that this happens at the climax of F91 can be seen in what comes immediately afterwards; Mobile Suit Victory Gundam where motherhood will take over fatherhood.

Even when Seabook complains that it's impossible, Monica encourages him. As a result, Seabook was able to discover Cecily floating in space. Three elements were essential to this: Monica, who is both an engineer and Seabook's mother, the Gundam F91 she created, and the pilot aptitude of the child Seabook. The three united as one. In other words, if the developer of the weapon called the mobile suit, the Gundam, and the son who rides it cooperated, it would have been possible to save a life drifting in space. When Tem is reunited with his son Amuro after having been lost adrift in space, he can no longer act as a parent and is only interested in the Gundam and his life as an engineer.

As both an engineer who created the Gundam, as well as a story of the parents of Gundam pilots, the despair that began with Tem Ray is repeated by Monica Arno in Gundam F91. The ending of F91 is not only able to save the life that was lost in space, Cecily/Tem, but also the lives of the engineer parents, Tem/Monica. That's why the story depicted in Gundam F91 is in a sense a retelling of Mobile Suit Gundam and the tragedy of what happened in the very first episode of the series is reversed in the finale of Gundam F91. Of course, this is accomplished by a mother and a child rather than a father and a child. It is the mother who can restore the bond between a parent and a child.

Indeed, the female characters featured in Gundam F91 are portrayed as individuals capable of reshaping their destinies. Nadia, Cecily's mother, breaks away from the Ronah family, while

Monica opts for an engineering career over traditional motherhood. Annamarie, an enemy pilot, defects from the Crossbone Vanguard to align with the protagonist's cause. Cecily herself returns from her familial ties with the Ronahs to reunite with Seabook and her friends. Each woman demonstrates the ability to transcend her initial circumstances through personal agency.

Conversely, the male characters, characterized by their naivety and resistance to change, tend to remain entrenched in their established roles. Notably, three fathers—Theo Fairchild, Carozzo Ronah, and Leslie Arno—meet unfortunate fates. Despite Leslie's commendable stance, raising their children by himself, while Monica works as an engineer serving as a poignant contrast, men, in this narrative, struggle to alter their paths. This divergence may explain the narrative choice to feature women and mothers as the guiding figures for Seabook in the story's conclusion.

In Tomino's works, there's a recurring theme highlighting the importance of both paternal and maternal figures in shaping characters. In "Brain Powerd" (Tomino, 1998), Yuu Isami's grandmother, Naoko, lost her husband when Yuu's mother, Midori, was just a baby. This absence of a father figure left Midori without the disciplinarian influence in her upbringing. When Midori, now a mother herself, found her own children, Yuu and Iiko, to be a hindrance to her scientific work, she left them to be raised by Naoko.

As the children adjusted to their new home with Naoko, Midori eventually returned, having discovered a way for them to contribute to her research. Despite the children's reluctance to leave, Naoko, unable to persuade her daughter otherwise, had to watch as Midori took them back. In the final episode, Naoko, realizing the consequences of her husband's absence in assuming a more paternal role, confronts Midori. She slaps her and implores her to halt her pursuits. This climactic scene serves as the culmination of Naoko and Midori's character arcs.

This lack of a husband, or a paternal element in general, for Naoko is contrasted in *Mobile Suit Gundam F91* with the lack of a wife, or a maternal element in general, with the villain Iron Mask. As Tomino says in the *Family Theory of Gundam*;

“It is natural that a person must take turns raising a child. It's unexpectedly important. In other words, this includes the truth that "two logics, fatherhood and motherhood, are always necessary to raise a child. One logic alone cannot support one person. The influence of the two logics cultivates the capacity of human beings to live in various situations. That is why we must be careful not to occupy the family with "only the logic of paternity" or "only the logic of maternity". Of course, at this point, there is no need to adhere to the idea that men are paternal and women are maternal. Not all couples will have a father who is strong and a mother who is receptive. In some families, the father is gentle and the mother takes the lead. This is the basic attitude of child rearing. This is not a difficult thing to do if you are aware of it, because this is how human beings have accumulated their history.” (Tomino, 2011: 110)

The narrative suggests that, unlike fathers who seem incapable of evolving or guiding their children, women and mothers take on this crucial role. The story implies that children, unable to change their fathers, must reject them and forge their own path. This theme echoes in the growth of Amuro, who metaphorically matures from his father's “death”. The narrative implies that a father, unable to connect with and guide a child like Monica—both a woman and a mother—represents a limitation in understanding and mentorship. This is the counterpoint and climax of Mobile Suit Gundam F91, where fatherhood has gone out of control.

4.4 Mobile Suit Victory Gundam

Victory Gundam unfolds a gripping narrative centered on the conflict between The League Militaire and the Zanscare Empire. With the Earth Federation teetering on the brink of collapse, the spacenoid Zanscare Empire, advocates of Marianism—a matriarchal society founded on maternal love—launches an assault on Earth. In response, the League Militaire emerges as a makeshift military force comprising both current and former Federation officers. Primarily composed of elderly men, it includes the Shrike Team, a unit of female pilots led by a middle-aged man named Oliver Inoe and his girlfriend Marbet Fingerhat, who holds a special place in the main character Uso's heart.

The narrative revolves around three main characters: 13-year-old Uso Ewin, 11-year-old Shakti Kareen, and 17-year-old Katejina Loos. In the backdrop of the Universal Century, Earth's habitation is restricted to privileged individuals within designated zones, leaving many to dwell on Earth illegally. Uso and Shakti find themselves in the illegal settlement of Kasarelia in Eastern Europe, while Katejina resides in the exclusive city of Woowig, a zone for the elite. Living without their parents in Kasarelia, Uso nurtures a one-sided affection for Katejina.

The trio becomes entangled in the conflict between the League Militaire and Zanscare. Uso and Shakti align with the former, while Katejina joins the latter after being rescued by Zanscare officer Cronicle Asher, who happens to be the younger brother of the Zanscare Empire's queen. Although Queen Maria appears to lead on the surface, an enigmatic figure named Kagatie manipulates events from the shadows. In the story's climax, Kagatie plots to deploy the Angel Halo, a colossal psychic device in space, to spread Maria's prayers of peace across Earth, quelling all conflicts and pacifying every living being.

I would like to quote Tomino's statement here.

"I wonder if people will look at it 7 or 8 years from now and say, "Tomino was right in depicting that time in Victory Gundam. I can imagine that people will say, "He tried to depict the world of adults, where the bubble burst and everyone started to become jaded, by comparing it to the child Uso, but in the end, he left us in the same situation" (laughs)."
(Tomino, 1994)

The first theme in Victory Gundam centers around the disintegration of adult society, especially following the collapse of the bubble economy (Motonobu, 2004:70). The conventional narrative of "attending a prestigious university, securing a good job, achieving success in life, and attaining happiness" no longer holds sway. The values and perspectives imparted by paternal figures to their children are now dismissed, and there is a pervasive skepticism toward the established worldview. Amidst this upheaval, high-achieving students, traditionally regarded as paragons of success, find themselves adrift, losing their way. An honor student, in this context, is not merely a child proficient or deficient in academics; rather, it is a child who once adhered to the values upheld by adults but is now grappling with a sense of purposelessness.

Victory Gundam delves into the theme of adults grappling with unfulfilled self-realization and retreating from the world, observed keenly by the watching eyes of children. Zeon Deikun, the emblematic figure of the high-growth period and the 1980s in Mobile Suit Gundam, advocated leaving Earth (motherhood) to evolve into Newtypes (adults). Conversely, the symbol of the 90s, reflective of the post-bubble era's pessimistic atmosphere, is Kagatie, who desires to "retreat into his motherly Queen Maria's bosom and regress to infancy."

In Tomino's works, it is paternity that makes boys grow up and motherhood that makes them regress. The conflict between the two is the central motif of the Gundam series. However, Victory Gundam takes a distinctive turn as motherhood prevails over paternity, culminating in Uso and the adults being enveloped by maternal influences. In this narrative, the protagonists ultimately opt for a form of affirmation of the existing order, embracing withdrawal.

There are many women in this series who try to take the place of a mother. The Shrike team is a prime example of this. On the eve of the Victory Gundam broadcast, women's entry into society advanced rapidly with the enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Law in the 1980s and the massive hiring of women during the bubble period (Molony, 1995:297). However, some of these women, who were hailed as career women at the time, were frustrated during the recession of the 1990s when they ran into the wall of a male-dominated society that had lost its leeway (Molony, 1995:296). They traded off their careers for love and marriage. Perhaps the Shrike team was modeled after these women that Tomino saw when Victory Gundam was broadcast.

Conversely, in the case of Katejina, she has not met a paternal man who would accept her frustration, and in fact, such a man does not appear in this work. Perhaps this is the reason she is constantly frustrated. Early revelations shed light on Katejina's family dynamics—her mother engaging in an affair with a younger man, while her father opts to feign ignorance. Her father also has a backroom deal with Zanscare's special forces. It's probably the result of him thinking about his family's safety in his own way. However, Katejina ignores such things and criticizes her father. After this he slaps Katejina but is clearly taken aback by what he just did. Being shorter in stature compared to his daughter also makes him seem very weak when compared to her defiance. Thus, insufficient paternity and excessive motherhood is the overall impression of Victory Gundam.

On the other hand Katejina is struggling to fit in in Zanscare. Perhaps it is her desire to support her rescuer Cronicle, but Katejina, who had no place in her parents' home or in the League Militaire, has nowhere left to run. Uso, who is loved by everyone and has a strong sense of self-esteem despite his lower class background, and Katejina, who is from the upper class but is overly self-conscious and does not fit in with her surroundings, quickly become isolated. In episode 28, Uso is convinced that Katejina won't kill him because she loves him. To Katejina, this naivete is both dazzling and infuriating.

In episode 27, the shape of the Keilas Guilie, a space laser cannon, unleashed by Uso, is notable. No matter how you look at it, it is in the shape of a male organ. Symbolically, this represents Uso's ejaculation (penetration). He is trying to become an adult. But he is prevented from doing so by Katejina, who destroys the cannon's barrel. The episode ends

with Uso leaving the cannon and returning to Shakti, the maternal childhood friend. This is also part of the theme of Victory Gundam.

The young girls Shakti and Suzy discuss cleaning and cooking with the warring adults in the background in episode 31, Launch of the Motorad. Watching other war or robot anime, there is an impression that all human life is concentrated in extraordinary battlefields and revolutions, but in reality, as the girls say, what is important for people to live is not in the extraordinary but rather in the ordinary. However, there is a character in Victory Gundam who could not find the meaning of life in such everyday life. She is Katejina Loos. She jumps into the battlefield, an extraordinary place, in search of a more intense life.

The existence of the Shrike team signifies a decline in the status of men in the Gundam series. Around Uso, there are almost no real adult men to admire or rebel against. Instead, there are only maternal female warriors who indulge Uso to no end. The corrupt Earth Federation, the fight between Uso and Odello, and the women of the Shrike team watching over their fight in episode 11, neatly overlap with the common motif in Tomino's works of women with maternal feelings watching over men fighting in a dysfunctional male-dominated society. What is depicted there is the conflict between the desire to feel safe in the bosom of women and the desire to grow up out of it.

Lupe Cineau, a female enemy pilot, as well as most of the adult women in Victory Gundam are very fond of Uso. As mentioned before, these women, who have devoted themselves to their work as career women, must have run into the wall of male-dominated society. The military is a male-dominated society after all, and women are not valued beyond a certain point and cannot rise in the ranks. Even Lupe Cineau, a first-rate pilot, cannot survive in the organization without flirting with her superior officer, Pippiniden, who is another weak man. But giving up the pursuit of a career doesn't mean there's nothing else to do. If they work a little harder, they should be able to get a man or two in no time. They are fed up with grown men not doing that. Since there are no decent men in Victory Gundam, the girls take their loneliness out on Uso.

And Lupe Cineau's "horrible torture" in episode 29 is to force the captured Uso to take a bath with her. This scene is tantamount to asking Uso to become her property. She thinks that

since Uso is still a boy, she can make him into the man of her choice. She thinks that Uso is a Newtype man. Naturally, Uso insists that he is a normal child. What Uso does not like here are women who impose their selfish hopes and desires on their children, and there are many such adult women in Victory Gundam. Uso's mother, who appears in episode 30, is one such mother.

In the case of Lupe Cineau in Victory Gundam, I think the fantasy of seeking a strong man which was a major part in the earlier Gundam series no longer exists. In fact, it is fair to say that there are no adult men in the work who could be called such. Neither among the enemies nor the allies. However, it does not mean that they do not want some kind of redemption in the form of a child. They don't want to be in a relationship with an adult man, go through the proper process, have and raise a child of their own. They don't want an incapable husband, but they do want a child (future). And not just any child, but a special child. Half of it is the man's fault. Lupe Cineau tried to be Uso's mother and even tried to have an incestuous relationship with him. But Uso refuses. She was bitten on the breast when Uso ran away from her bath, which means symbolically, that she tried to breastfeed the child and was rejected.

Episode 42 Fresh Blood is a Whirlpool of Light, shows the death of Pippiniden, Cronicle's superior and a man who has accomplished barely anything throughout the story. Lupe, who is interested in Uso, plays up her femininity, wearing a dress over her pilot uniform, in order to get Pippiniden to do what she wants. In this story, Lupe Cineau is not the only one who is tired of life and disgusted with the world. Fuala Griffon, another female Zanscare officer lost her sanity after being sentenced to be cast adrift in space. Even Kagatie, the very person who started this war, is fed up with the world. They are dependent on the children's sense of innocence. Kagatie wants to become an innocent child himself and be healed in the bosom of his motherly Queen Maria.

The leader of the Shrike Team, Oliver Inoe, may be an adult, but his eagerness to please the Shrike Team and particularly Marbet, reveals a desperate inclination towards gaining their approval. This is evident in episode 10, titled "Brilliant! Shrike Team." Notably, right from his initial appearance, Oliver has willingly entrusted the piloting of the titular Victory Gundam to Uso. Consequently, Uso finds it challenging to admire or empathize with him, as he seems to have already surpassed Oliver. In many ways, Oliver reflects a common scenario

in the real world where adults, like fathers seeking guidance on using modern technology from their sons, grapple with aspects they find unfamiliar.

This portrayal might be an uncomfortable departure for fans of the original Mobile Suit Gundam, who appreciated characters like the seasoned and honorable enemy officer Ramba Ral. Ral played a pivotal role in Amuro's growth as both a pilot and an individual through masculine rivalry. However, in the era of Victory Gundam, where traditional notions of masculinity have eroded, Oliver Inoe emerges as a more emblematic character, capturing the essence of a changing paradigm.

In Episode 18 "Space Fleet Battle" Uso goes to see Jin Jahannam, the leader of the League Militaire, to inquire about his father's whereabouts. However, the League Militaire has devised a plan to use doubles of their leader to combat information about the real leader leaking to the enemy. The fake Jin Jahannam that Uso and the others meet here is a weak and impetuous man. Uso is disappointed and frustrated by him and if Marbet had not soothed this frustration, Uso would have had an outburst.

In Episode 22, titled "The Tiger of Space," a character reminiscent of Ramba Ral engages in conflict with Uso. Even in this encounter, Uso's driving force for battle remains the quest to locate Shakti. Despite Marbet and other Shrike Team members reprimanding Uso for his perceived lack of military awareness, they ultimately extend forgiveness. The women in Victory Gundam harbor a soft spot for Uso, even though they are well aware of the harsh realities of combat. Later in the episode, Uso reunites with Godwald, an adult fighting for the Zanscare Empire, whom Uso encountered in a previous episode. In contrast to their sentimental parting before, Godwald now confronts Uso as a warrior, challenging him with the words, "Defeat me and become a full-fledged warrior."

Essentially, the first half of Episode 22 unfolds as a narrative about the indulgence of motherhood, while the second half depicts the struggle to surmount the challenges posed by fatherhood. Following his victory, Uso senses that Godwald, on his figurative deathbed, acknowledged Uso as a full-fledged warrior. However, Uso remains in denial. While Amuro Ray became a warrior by overcoming Ramba Ral, Uso in Victory Gundam refuses to

embrace a similar path. For him, the motherhood embodied by Marbet and Junko is more palatable than the paternalism represented by Godwald.

Of course, Mobile Suit Gundam and Zeta Gundam are not without such elements. Nevertheless, the initial segment of Victory Gundam more closely resembles "3000 Leagues in Search of Mother" (Takahata, 1976), a World Masterpiece Theater anime where Tomino served as a storyboard artist, than a conventional war narrative. This departure is evident in the primary characters' motivation, which revolves around the quest to find their parents. Fourteen years after the inception of Gundam, the series has shifted its focus to become a tale centered on maternal themes.

The connection to the World Masterpiece Theater is not confined to the storyline alone; it permeates other aspects of Victory Gundam, such as the series' overall art style, reminiscent of the animation prevalent during the 1970s. When the protagonists find themselves on Earth, they navigate rural European settings, evoking the ambiance of numerous World Masterpiece Theater series adapted from European novels spanning the 19th century to World War II. Notable examples include "Heidi, Girl of the Alps" (Takahata, 1974), which Tomino worked on as a storyboard artist and scriptwriter. Another homage in Victory Gundam is the dog named Flanders, accompanying the main characters on their ship—a nod to the World Masterpiece Theater anime "A Dog of Flanders" (Kuroda, 1975), which Tomino also contributed to as a storyboard artist. Consequently, there exists an enduring sense, evident in both the art style and setting of the series, of regressing and moving backward instead of progressing forward and maturing as opposed to leaps made forward in the realist animation of Char's Counterattack only 4 years earlier (Watzky, 2021).

Moving back from these influences, Victory Gundam shifts its lens to the Shrike team, unveiling their discontent with the federal army and exposing the gender disparities within the military hierarchy.

Right from the outset, the Shrike team voiced numerous grievances against the federal army, expressing dissatisfaction with the perceived unreliability of federal soldiers. The crux of their discontent stems from the glaring gender disparity within the high-ranking officers, all of whom are men. Despite the Shrike team's unwavering dedication and competence, they find themselves unable to ascend beyond a certain level or garner the recognition they

rightfully deserve. The military structure remains entrenched in a male-dominated paradigm, creating an insurmountable barrier for these women. Feeling disheartened, they cautiously turn their attention to their personal lives, only to discover an unsettling void. As they probe their societal role as soldiers, they teeter on the brink of losing their individual identities as women.

In their quest for fulfillment, these women earnestly vie for the attention of a man like Oliver, hoping to fill the void left by their unfulfilled roles as soldiers and to assume the position of a maternal figure for Uso. However, the harsh reality reveals the scarcity of eligible men within the League Militaire, as Oliver and Uso stand as singular figures among an aging male population. Faced with this stark reality, the women, in the end, find solace in immersing themselves even further in their work, realizing that war is the only facet where they can entrust their identities.

Marbet seems really happy in episode 28, The Great Escape. She has been frustrated for a long time, having lost her role as a pilot to Uso and having her position as a woman threatened by the Shrike team, but in this episode Marbet and Oliver get married in an enemy camp both as distraction but also for real. Now that she has the status of being Oliver's wife, she seems to have become much more stable mentally.

Conversely, Oliver Inoue undergoes a sudden transformation, displaying an earnest commitment to caring for the children. It appears that he is attempting to assume a paternal role in anticipation of a future with Marbet. Tragically, shortly after embracing this newfound responsibility, Oliver meets his demise in battle, with his subsequent suicide attack deemed an unnecessary loss. Tomino's sentiments towards suicide attacks, evident in his early works, have evolved. In the First Gundam, numerous men met heroic ends, sacrificing themselves through daring ramming maneuvers against enemy ships. However, post-Zeta Gundam, such dramatic and successful suicide attacks became increasingly rare in Tomino's narratives. More often than not, they either ended in failure or proved futile. Tomino seems to recognize the emotional allure of suicide attacks while simultaneously deeming them morally misguided. While it may provide a fleeting sense of satisfaction to one's ego, Tomino suggests that, in the grand scheme, it leaves little lasting impact. Consequently, Oliver departs

the narrative not as a father or a warrior, but as a figure caught in the conflicted space between these roles.

In Episode 30, titled "Mother's Gundam," Uso's mother, Myra Miguel, takes a significant role in the narrative. Employing her esoteric dreams as a basis, she forcefully imposes the Newtype concept on her son and, under the guise of gifted education, subjects him to a form of mental conditioning. Although Uso experiences discomfort with his mother, he exhibits a reluctance to part ways with her.

Traditionally in Gundam series, the main character's journey towards maturity involves leaving behind the maternal figure or a childhood friend standing in for a mother, moving towards a different woman. In the First Gundam, Amuro shifted from Kamaria and Fraw Bow to Matilda and Lalah; similarly, in Zeta Gundam, Kamille distanced himself from Hilda Bidan and Fa Yuiry, choosing Four Murasame. This thematic pattern symbolizes the hero's evolution from motherly love to adulthood, mirroring the human quest to escape Earth's gravity and evolve into Newtypes.

However, in Victory Gundam, Uso's relationship with his mother, Myra Miguel, deviates from this tradition. Despite his discomfort, Uso actively seeks solace in her arms, signaling a potential shift in Tomino's perspective on the conventional narrative of growing up. While Myra Miguel contemplates letting go of Uso, he remains deeply attached to her. In a tragic turn of events in Episode 36, "Mother Returns to the Earth," Myra Miguel is killed forcing Uso to break free from her influence.

Interestingly, the introduction of Hangelg Ewin, Uso's father, proves pivotal during the series' final battles. Uso, having been somewhat sheltered by the Shrike team, endeavors to act independently and mature in an attempt to earn his father's approval.

The series explores the idea that a child's growth requires not only the unconditional affirmation and embrace of motherhood but also the stern paternalism that challenges and rejects. In Victory Gundam, Uso appears more positive than characters like Katejina and Cronicle, who are driven by ambition to grow and participate in society. Uso, on the other hand, hesitates and is not quite ready to take decisive action. Queen Maria's prayer in Episode 45, "Uso Dances With Illusions," sends a message discouraging dreams of social reform,

urging a return to mundane daily life. Yet, this plea merely upholds the existing order. Moreover, as Uso's fighting instinct is hindered by the Angel Halo and Maria's prayer, he is almost lost in a hallucination but is ultimately saved by the luminous wings of light, a manifestation of his friend Odello's resolute will to fight.

In episode 47 "Women's Battlefield" Marbet, who is becoming a mother, defeats the crazed Fuala Griffon. Marbet defeats Fuala because she is pregnant with Oliver's child and is much more mentally stable than Fuala, who continues to hunger for a man. However, a mother, too, can hinder the growth of her children because of her obsession with them and her boundless love. Queen Maria is at the top of this list. Her bottomless motherhood amplified by the Angel Halo is about to lead the men of Zanscare and the creatures of the Earth to endless infantile regression.

In the finale of Victory Gundam, Episode 51, "Ascension of the Angels" everything comes to a head for the main characters. Just as Kagatie and Tassilo, the two men at the top of the Zanscare empire, were fighting over the control of Queen Maria, now Katejina has seemingly attained that same position as two men, Uso and Cronicle are fighting each other while she promises to love whoever wins. However, Uso wins and Cronicle's final thoughts are of her sister, Maria instead of Katejina. For Uso, Katejina isn't his priority either as he is focused on saving Shakti from the Angel Halo. Katejina's promise to love whoever wins is also a lie as after Cronicle dies she tries to kill Uso.

Katejina has been frustrated by unworthy men and hates motherly women. She believed that the weakening of men who should have been strong and the laxity of women who allowed this to happen led to the breakdown of her family and, in turn, the social chaos of society. The adults of the League Militaire sent boys into battle, and those boys defeated men one after another, the defeated men regressed into infantile regression in motherhood, and lonely women crazily took in men to be mothers. There is no order, nothing at all. Perhaps she was the only one who remained sane in the world of Victory Gundam. But in a world where sanity is not possible, she tried to stay sane, and before she knew it, she was on the side of madness. The earnest girl who tried to regain her strong paternal authority was swallowed up by the broken world.

Katejina says, "Grow up and aspire to change." Shakti says, "Let's go back to our hometown." Kagatie says, "I want to regress and become a recluse." In this story, these three people's ideas are at odds with each other.

In the end, Katejina is blinded and lost, unable to even find a way back to her hometown. Kagatie rejects reality, shooting at Maria's empty throne, before dying inside the collapsing Angel Halo. Shakti and Uso create a pseudo-family community without paternal authority alongside the pregnant Marbet and a couple of the surviving children from the League Militaire in Kasarelia, the hometown they left in the beginning.

Victory Gundam unfolds in the year 0153 of the Universal Century, mirroring the reality of 1993, following the collapse of a masculine worldview that favored competition and growth. In its wake emerges Marianism, a new cult with a matriarchal perspective. Despite the seemingly polite demeanor of the highest-ranking men in this society, such as Kagatie and Tassilo, they ultimately assert dominance over women through violent means. Tassilo's proclamation of adoration for the queen, Maria, while expressing disdain for women, exemplifies this stark contrast. After Fuala's death, when Maria interprets it as Fuala embracing womanhood (as her going to meet her lover in death), Tassilo vehemently contradicts her, emphasizing the distinction between motherhood and womanhood.

In fact, Marianism is a religion that is founded on imposing such male fantasies on women but in the end, that motherhood is out of control. And Uso, the main character, is a boy who has the same maternal fantasy about women, and in fact, most of the women he surrounds himself with end up playing the role of his mother. Thus, Uso ends up imposing his fantasy on Katejina without being able to see her for who or what she actually is.

By comparison, Katejina is a woman who is the opposite of such maternal fantasy, because she always has one man to love and who she also wants to compete with. That is why she is trying to grow up while simultaneously propping Cronicle up. However, Katejina's "be strong and grow up" philosophy is nothing but an illusion under the circumstances, because in the Victory Gundam world (in the 1990s), the conditions for adulthood or the goal of growth itself has been lost. So perhaps Uso's return to Kasarelia in the last episode is a way of choosing to create a place to grow up in.

The reason Katejina was so unforgiving would be because the men who never grow up force her to be a kind and pretty young lady or a war-torn girl forever. For her, who was looking for a decent man who would accept her as a real flesh and blood human being, the desire for an idol was a kind of violation. In fact, since her time in League Militaire in the first episodes, Katejina has thoroughly rejected the roles of a weak, beautiful girl or a mother who affirms me, which Uso has forced upon her, and even after that, she declares that she doesn't need him and that she finds him disgusting.

5. CONCLUSION

The exploration of the Gundam series reveals a consistent thematic undercurrent that revolves around family dynamics, the dichotomy between Earth and space, and the struggle between past and future. Throughout the series, the symbolism associated with motherhood and fatherhood serves as a guiding motif, with Earth representing nurturing yet stagnation, and space embodying growth, change, and the pursuit of a future. The subsequent installments from F91 to Victory Gundam continue to delve into the Earth-space dynamic, with F91 notably taking place entirely in space and Victory Gundam structuring its narrative around the dominance of maternity over paternity.

In Mobile Suit Gundam F91, Yoshiyuki Tomino extends his exploration of parent-child relationships, adding layers of complexity to established Gundam themes. The narrative reinforces the importance of both paternal and maternal influences in a child's life while also delving into the consequences of unchecked ideologies and highlighting the redemptive power of the maternal figure. Departing from the traditional Newtype paradigm, F91 empowers female characters like Monica, portraying them as engineers and mothers, challenging rigid gender roles and showcasing women's agency in shaping their circumstances. The ending of F91 represents a paradigm shift, subverting the notion that only fathers can guide and shape their children. Monica, the maternal figure, plays a crucial role in restoring the parent-child bond, offering a more nuanced perspective on familial relationships. This reimagining of Gundam themes serves as a reflection on established norms, allowing women and mothers to take center stage as catalysts for change and redemption in the Gundam universe.

Victory Gundam, coinciding with Japan's post-bubble economy era, serves as a poignant exploration of societal disillusionment and the breakdown of traditional roles. The series portrays a world where conventional paths and societal values represented by paternal figures have crumbled. Characters like Katejina, seeking a strong paternal influence, find themselves frustrated and isolated in a society lacking proper role models. Conversely, the prevalence of motherhood, exemplified by characters like Marbet and the Shrike Team, reflects a society

grappling with loss and struggling to define new roles. Symbolism, such as Uso's symbolic struggle for adulthood and recurring themes of regression, underscores Tomino's commentary on navigating a society in flux. The intricate relationships between characters, particularly the complexities of Uso and Katejina's dynamic, serve as a microcosm for broader societal struggles explored in the narrative. Victory Gundam reflects the challenges and disillusionments of its time, prompting viewers to contemplate the impact of societal shifts on individual identities, the blurred lines between adulthood and childhood regression, and the enduring search for meaning and fulfillment in a transforming world.

I hope that this paper can be used to create further research on related topics. There are a lot of different avenues for further exploration even among the series that I focused on. This sort of approach could also be used when taking a look at other entries in the Mobile Suit Gundam franchise that Yoshiyuki Tomino was not involved with to see how different people interpret his creation.

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