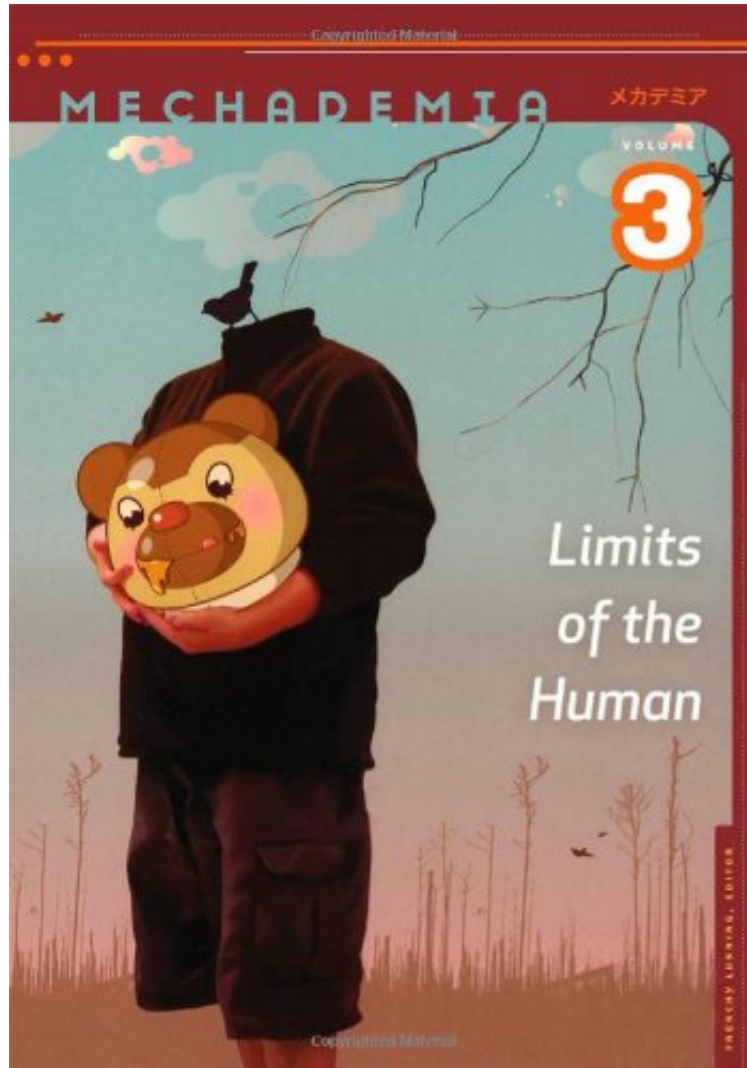


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## Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human

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**From Brand: University Of Minnesota Press : Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great edition. By KNN Using this book a reference for my paper. The essays are well written and has several thought provoking ideas that examines posthumanism. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By John M Clean, well wrapped 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Mechademia Hits Its Stride By K. Klimt Though I have enjoyed both of the previous Mechademia volumes, I must say that this most recent excursion is the most thorough, exciting, and well-presented of them all. Though previous volumes were slightly uneven, Mechademia 3, after an opening salvo by Mark Taylor I will charitably call abstruse

(sample sentence: 'Always articulated between a condition of undifferentiation and indifferent differentiation, information emerges along the two-sided edge of chaos,' p. 5), it is a tremendously satisfying and stimulating work, appropriately scholarly without often veering into the sort of convoluted scholaresque that limits intelligent discourse to a very privileged few. Laura Miller's 'Extreme Makeover of a Heian-Era Wizard' is a consummate examination of the reincarnation of a historical-mythological Japanese figure into an icon of otaku adulation. She makes compelling points about the capacity for fringe cultures to make the female voice--so often neglected by dominant cultural/historical discourse--a viable one, and she explores how seemingly trivializing activities can in fact reaffirm traditional Japanese culture. Theresa Winge provides a competent and useful overview of one of Japan's strangest fashion cliques: the Lolita, in all her myriad forms. She makes intriguing points about the ritualistic nature of the adoption of a Lolita identity (points that could, in fact, probably be applied to incorporation into any subculture), and aims to examine the trend from the position of an insider. Winge's article is beautifully structured and informative, but I find something slightly unsettling in the Lolita dichotomy--a woman's attempt to be 'strong and sexy' whilst hiding behind a 'childhood patina', which seems to subvert the larger question, which is whether Lolita provides a way to escape adulthood (and its responsibilities) or emerge as a different type of adult, one in full possession of her own sexuality. In any case, the article is invaluable in providing a scholarly perspective on a fashion clique that even I find prohibitively weird. Thomas Lamarre, as usual, does a bang-up job in evaluating the differences between US and Japanese wartime propaganda, and how the tendency to render our enemies as bestial is hardly more than a displaced racism that simultaneously effaces the real impact and meaning of racial bias. He is always enjoyable to read, and even if I find his insistence upon calling viewers of anime/manga 'human viewers' a little silly (and yes I understand why, but really, are there other kinds?), his article is extremely informative and straightforward. Lawrence Bird's article comparing the similarities and differences between Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), Tezuka Osamu's manga of the same name from 1949, and the most recent anime from Rintaro and Otomo Katsuhiro (2001) is a fabulous piece of comparative writing and perhaps my favorite work in the volume. His argument is complex, well-presented and fully fleshed-out and examines how these films present the modern city as a 'distillation of identity,' and how architectural forms such as the tower or the labyrinth reflect differing ideologies about race and otherness. Both Sharalyn Orbaugh and Steven Brown examine the Mamoru Oshii's *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*: Orbaugh examines how the cyborgs of the title retain or develop human affect, and thereby the essence of humanity, and Brown details the connection between Oshii's film and the still-uncanny creations of German artist Hans Bellmer. Both articles are well-written and tremendously interesting, providing fruitful means of looking at highly complex and weighty texts. Finally, Teri Silvio examines the increasingly religious status of mass-produced dolls in Taiwan, which seem to increasingly replace traditional religious icons. This article provides a wealth of historical information as well as a simple, and effective, take-down of the revered Jean Baudrillard's conception of the 'Real,' which parallels traditional notions of the God of Abraham--Silvio deftly demonstrates that Baudrillard's ideas are of limited utility in religious cultures, such as those of traditional Taiwan and Japan, that locate reality and divinity not outside the simulacrum but within it. Aside from this, the article is genuinely respectful about something that seems at first to frankly bizarre, if not blasphemous. All in all, I would highly recommend this volume to anyone even vaguely interested in studies of posthumanism and the other frontiers of human liminality, postmodern Japanese arts and culture, or to anyone who appreciates well-written, well-argued, and largely unpretentious articles about highly relevant matters.

Dramatic advances in genetics, cloning, robotics, and nanotechnology have given rise to both hopes and fears about how technology might transform humanity. As the possibility of a posthuman future becomes increasingly likely, debates about how to interpret or shape this future abound. In Japan, anime and manga artists have for decades been imagining the contours of posthumanity, creating dazzling and sometimes disturbing works of art that envision a variety of human/nonhuman hybrids: biological/mechanical, human/animal, and human/monster. Anime and manga offer a constellation of posthuman prototypes whose hybrid natures require a shift in our perception of what it means to be human. Limits of the Human the third volume in the Mechademia series maps the terrain of posthumanity using manga and anime as guides and signposts to understand how to think about humanity's new potentialities and limits. Through a wide range of texts the folklore-inspired monsters that populate Mizuki Shigeru's manga; Japan's Gothic Lolita subculture; Tezuka Osamu's original cyborg hero, Atom, and his manga version of Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (along with Tomo Katsuhiro's 2001 anime film adaptation); the robot anime, *Gundam*; and the notion of the uncanny in *Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence*, among others the essays in this volume reject simple human/nonhuman dichotomies and instead encourage a provocative rethinking of the definitions of humanity along entirely unexpected frontiers. Contributors: William L. Benzon, Lawrence Bird, Christopher Bolton, Steven T. Brown, Joshua Paul Dale, Michael Dylan Foster, Crispin Freeman, Marc Hairston, Paul Jackson, Thomas LaMarre, Antonia Levi, Margherita Long, Laura Miller, Hajime Nakatani, Susan Napier, Natsume Fusanosuke, Sharalyn Orbaugh, Tsuka Eiji, Adle-Elise Prvost and MUSEbasement; Teri Silvio, Takayuki Tatsumi, Mark C. Taylor, Theresa Winge, Cary Wolfe, Wendy Siuyi

Wong, and Yomota Inuhiko.