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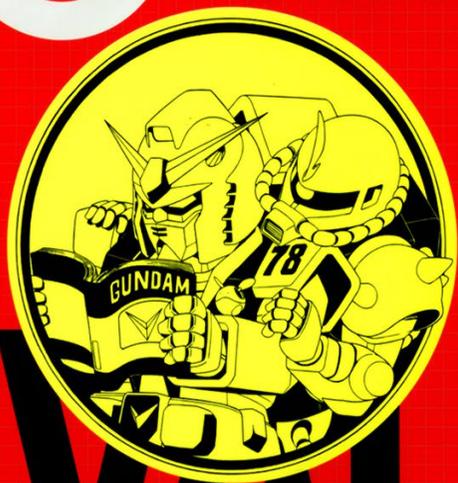
# G20

ガンダム・トリビュートマガジン

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## 復刻版



# REVIVAL

# SIDE-A

# GUNDAM 20th

# TRIBUTE MAGAZINE

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## **Newtype Apocalypse**

Char, Amuro, and Lalah: Their Individual  
"Transcendence"

**Text by**

Tadashi Nagase



Across the Gundam series, "Newtypes" are more than just psychics. They're a pathway for humanity to merge with Mother Nature, achieving a nirvana-like peace. They're the embodiment of a transcendent force capable of elevating humanity to a nobler state. And they're the promise of ultimate spiritual evolution, where humans surpass their mortal coil and reach the divine realm.

Behind all this lies a mystical belief in cosmic human evolution: the profound belief that as we venture into the star-studded expanse and carve out our celestial homes, the very essence of our being will undergo a metamorphosis.

Yet, in the harsh light of the Universal Century's public consciousness, Newtypes are often reduced to mere curiosities—individuals with extraordinary prowess in piloting mobile suits. Those privy to classified information might reveal that research into these phenomena began at the secretive Flanagan Agency in the Principality of Zeon during the crucible of the One Year War. This research later evolved into cutting-edge technologies aimed at artificially awakening these unique abilities in Cyber-Newtype.

If the true "potential" of Newtypes were indeed so narrow, they would be nothing more than expendable assets for nations and armies to exploit. These new humans—whether naturally discovered or forcibly enhanced—awaken to their abilities only to find themselves discarded like spent shells in the relentless tides of history.

Yes, in Tomino's dramas, Newtypes are those who awaken to the "innovation" of a new age, only to suffer the indignity of being reduced to mere "tools" in the grand machinations of power.

So what exactly is this "innovation?"

What kind of future do Amuro, Char, and the others envision?

## **CAMILLE'S APOCALYPSE**

The key lies in the concept of cosmic human evolution, first introduced in *Mobile Suit Gundam* and then crystallized in *Mobile Suit Zeta Gundam* and *Mobile Suit Gundam ZZ*.

The idea that humanity evolves and ascends to a higher spiritual plane as it ventures into space isn't new. Its roots stretch back to medieval times and beyond. In Western medieval Neoplatonism, the universe was imagined as a series of concentric spheres. At the center lay the material world—Earth—cradling hell at its core. Moving outward, these spheres became progressively purer, made of precious metals, then semi-precious stones, and finally jewels. Planets, stars, and celestial bodies were thought to be fixed to these invisible celestial spheres.

Natural philosophers like Descartes speculated that these higher celestial spheres might house more advanced beings. This reasoning stemmed from the concept of the Great Chain of Being—a hierarchical structure of all life

and matter in the universe, from the lowliest worm to humans to angels, with no gaps between.

As the 19th century waned, these mystical notions underwent a renaissance, now clothed in the garb of human space colonization.

In 1896, a French astronomer and spiritualist named Camille Flammarion pioneered this new thought. Already renowned for his treatises on extraterrestrial life and imaginative scientific musings, Flammarion published a sci-fi novel titled *The End of the World*. The book first paints a crisis reminiscent of *Deep Impact* or *Armageddon* with a comet threatening Earth. But Flammarion's true genius shines in the latter half, where he transports us to an unimaginably distant future. Here, in the twilight of a cooling sun and a frozen Earth, the last scions of humanity—Omega and Eva—embark on a transcendent journey. Guided by the ethereal wisdom of Cheops, the ancient Egyptian pharaoh and magician, they ascend to Jupiter, the promised land of immortals.

While still trailing the mystical threads of medieval thought with its spiritual transcendence, this marked the dawn of modern cosmic evolution philosophy.

## **TSIOLKOVSKY'S SPACE ANGELS**

Almost simultaneously but independently from Flammarion, Konstantin E. Tsiolkovsky, revered as the father of Russian rocketry, independently dissected and prophesied humanity's evolution into the cosmos, his gaze fixed firmly on the technical horizons.

"Earth is the cradle of humanity, but one cannot live in a cradle forever," goes his famous quote. Yet in his 1895 work *Dreams of Earth and Sky*, he painted a breathtaking tableau of post-terrestrial humanity. These were no mere space-faring humans, but immortal celestial beings—space angels gliding effortlessly through the vacuum, their domain the asteroid belt. Imagine creatures with skin like supple, airtight leather, adorned with vast, diaphanous wings suffused with chlorophyll, dancing in zero gravity's embrace.

Indeed, Tsiolkovsky's sublime vision was of humanity evolving into something beyond human.

His 1918 work, *Beyond Earth* (published as a book in 1920), brings us closer to familiar ground—space colonies in geostationary orbit, voyages to lunar and Martian trajectories. Here, he posits a profound truth: the liberation from gravity's tyranny is the ultimate realization of humanity's age-old dreams.

While he acknowledged the potential of artificial gravity through centrifugal force, Tsiolkovsky saw it as a crutch, necessary only for mundane tasks like bathing. For him, the grand purpose of our cosmic exodus was to shed the shackles of gravity itself. In this work, he christens the space-dwellers with a term both poetic and prophetic: "angels."

But Tsiolkovsky wasn't alone in his cosmic reveries. Hermann Oberth, the German father of rocketry, conducted space engineering research alongside experiments in mental weightlessness through theosophical drug use. Robert H. Goddard, the American father of rocketry, secretly penned visions of galactic colonization.

1930s Britain saw the rise of Olaf Stapledon, whose *Last and First Men* charted humanity's epic journey from terrestrial extinction to Venusian refuge, culminating in a poignant last stand on distant Neptune. His 1937 masterpiece *Star Maker* expanded this canvas to cosmic proportions, encompassing the birth and death of the universe and the emergence of a being transcending creation itself.

Meanwhile, in France, the Jesuit priest and renowned paleontologist Teilhard de Chardin was crafting a mystical evolutionary theory. He envisioned humanity's spiritual ascension (integration) through the Earth's noosphere, converging towards an Omega Point of ultimate unity.

This rich tapestry of human cosmic evolution, further embroidered by the likes of theoretical physicists Freeman J. Dyson and Frank J. Tipler, has now woven itself into the very fabric of American-centric pop culture under the names of posthumanism or transhumanism.

## THE FALLEN ANGEL CHAR

Revisiting Gundam through the lens of cosmic human evolution reveals striking parallels.

Earth—a crucible of base desires and pollution. The exodus from this tainted cradle leads to the promise of Lagrange point colonies and lunar habitats. Yet, even these sanctuaries find themselves sullied by the stain of terrestrial politics and the scourge of war.

The lifeblood of these space colonies—their very sustenance—is drawn from the asteroid belt, that cosmic no-man's-land between Mars and Jupiter. But their true power, their energy, is harvested from the Jovian realm's helium-3 reserves. It's a poetic irony: the "power" fueling the quasi-secular near-Earth colonies cascades from the lofty heights beyond Mars, as if bestowed by the celestial spheres themselves.

In the wake of the One Year War, we find Char in self-imposed exile amidst the asteroid belt. There, in the embrace of zero gravity, he rejuvenates his "power" before his phoenix-like return to the Earth Sphere, reborn as Quattro Bajeeena. And let us not forget the Axis asteroid—that pivotal celestial body weaving through *Zeta*, *ZZ*, and *Char's Counterattack*. Is it not the very embodiment of that cruel "power" descended from higher planes?

Resurrected Char, a messenger of calamity from the heavens, seizes power in Neo Zeon as such a destroyer. In these sequels, Char is Lucifer, the destroying angel, a fallen angel bringing punishment (purging) to Earth's humanity for refusing to step into the innovation towards higher existence.

But wait. Does not Char's stance here diverge, ever so subtly, from the cosmic evolution philosophy we've traced?

Indeed it does. The Gundam series reveals a fascinating ambiguity in its portrayal of the "awakened ones"—the true Newtypes. This ambiguity crystallizes in the trinity of the first TV series: Char, Amuro, and Lalah.

Char's ambition isn't mere self-transcendence through Newtype abilities. His ultimate goal, unveiled at last in Char's Counterattack, is far grander—to wield that power as a shepherd, guiding a corrupted humanity towards loftier planes of existence. In Char's eyes, humanity becomes not a peer, but a ward—a child to be protected and led. Yet his lofty aspirations find themselves betrayed by the powers of Earth, still shackled by gravity's curse—nations and militaries alike. Thus, his conclusion becomes inescapable: those who obstruct the path to a nobler society must be purged...

Here we see the tragedy of a chosen one, once intent on mankind's salvation, now driven to despair by that very humanity, poised to mete out cosmic punishment. It's the archetype of the father figure disciplining his wayward children... This is paternalism in its most classic, most twisted form, inextricably entwined with a profound political nihilism—the dark heart of a fascist ideology.

## **SPRING AND ASHURA**

Yet, even as Char treads the precarious path of fascism, Char's path up to Counterattack is far more consistent than Amuro Ray's. Char's impassioned declaration—that those who shun "power" are impotent to reshape the world—resonates with an undeniable truth, at least within the confines of its own twisted logic.

True, Amuro's *modus operandi* might appear a labyrinth of contradictions, a tapestry of chaos. But such judgments are the myopic views of the mundane.

Amuro is a man who has awakened to "eternity," who has glimpsed, if only for a moment, the pinnacle of the great chain of being.

In his heart-rending communion with Lalah, Amuro experiences that ineffable instant when souls truly intertwine. A meteoric ascent to absolute transcendence... Amuro's eyes are opened to a realm at the very fringes of existence, not unlike the cosmic genesis witnessed by the protagonist in Stapledon's magnum opus, at the culmination of his odyssey beyond the bounds of eternity.

In the grand tapestries of Neoplatonism and its shadow self, Gnostic cosmology, the hierarchical edifice of life stretches ad infinitum. The ascent through "evolution" may indeed herald a more pristine state of being. Yet, even among the "angels" sprouting from the tree of human evolution, infinite gradations persist. An endless Jacob's ladder with no heavenly perch in sight...

Neoplatonism, however, elevates humanity to the zenith of divine favor, precisely because we straddle the chasm between bestial flesh and angelic spirit, a crucible where original sin and purity alchemize. It is this unique position that beckons Christ the Savior to descend unto humanity.

By this selfsame grace, Amuro in the "Gundam" saga is granted a glimpse of "eternity," catalyzed by his fateful encounter with Lalah. From that moment forth, Amuro traverses the remainder of his earthly pilgrimage haunted by the specter of that miraculous revelation.

If Char is Lucifer incarnate, then Amuro is Ashura personified—an anti-angel, a non-celestial entity suspended in the liminal space between the masses and the empyrean realm. On this defiled earth, his gaze forever fixed on the distant celestial spheres, Amuro steels himself against the siren call of power that promises human innovation and continues to struggle for a justice he knows is unattainable.

As the poet-sage Kenji Miyazawa intoned in his *Spring and Ashura* (*mental sketch modified*).

*Down underneath the light of the April atmosphere  
I come and go, spitting and grinding my teeth  
I am an Ashura*

Thus does Amuro embody that lone Ashura, forever earthbound, forever striving...

## **IF ONLY EVERYONE COULD MELD TOGETHER**

The aforementioned analysis is but one lens through which to view "Newtypes." However, when we introduce another figure who embodies the "Newtype" essence, this entire paradigm is shattered at its core.

Enter Lalah.

In truth, the preceding interpretation of Amuro and Lalah's fateful encounter conceals a single, pivotal falsehood.

While Amuro may have indeed glimpsed eternity, Lalah's quest was not one of ascension. Rather, she sought a horizontal path, a primal connection where humans, as creatures crawling upon the earth, could truly understand one another and merge their very souls.

Lurking behind this character design is a romantic view of womanhood typical of Director Tomino's generation. "Woman," equated with "mother," the bearer of life, is thus perceived as closer to "nature" and standing in stark opposition to power or "force."

She emerges as a siren who can beckon all men to shed their obsession with "power" and "become my children" (echoing Miyuki Nakajima), a temptress calling for a return to the primordial womb...

This perspective on women could be seen as the zenith of discrimination. Yet Tomino's unique dramaturgy, which paints in vivid strokes the self-

destruction of women who forsake this ideal in pursuit of "power," resonates uncannily with contemporary feminist critiques, albeit in a form unintended by its creator.

Thus, the contact between Lalah and Amuro, which ignites this tragedy, transforms into a primal struggle between two "children" over the ecstatic experience of returning to the maternal embrace and melting back into the womb, rather than ascending to some transcendent peak.

As Char's Counterattack nears its climax, Char hurls a shocking declaration at Amuro: "Lalah Sune was a woman who may have become a mother to me."

She stands as the incarnation of the earth mother goddess, rejecting all forms of "power"—be it as an instrument of war, a means to salvage the secular world, or a path to transcendent heights—and calling us to return to her all-encompassing embrace...

Yet this return to the womb is but another name for "death." In the film, Amuro is ceaselessly tormented by nightmares of Lalah's seductive invitation to "come hither."

Ecstasy becomes synonymous with death, where all of humanity dissolves into the primordial "mother..."

Moreover, this vision threatens to upend the romantic view of women so deeply ingrained in Tomino's generation. It's little wonder that Director Tomino would bristle at Neon Genesis Evangelion.

In the film, Tomino abandoned, through an all-too-convenient "miracle," the very crux of the matter: the irreconcilable contradiction between ascending to transcendent heights and returning to the womb. If Tomino speaks of his responsibility for phenomena like Aum Shinrikyo (Aum Supreme Truth) or EVA, his true accountability lies in abandoning this crucial philosophical quandary.

EVA was a work that delved unflinchingly into the grotesqueness of motherhood, a theme Tomino had turned away from. What's more, it did so through the lens of a hopelessly inadequate boy, utterly devoid of any desire for "power," be it transcendent or worldly. Small wonder it would incite such ire.

Thus, there remains but one path forward. What's anticipated from the new Tomino Gundam in 1999 is to surpass Char's Counterattack and once again confront the perilous yet irresistible theme of "Newtypes."

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**Human Reformation:**  
The Superior Abilities of Newtypes

**Text by**  
Tsukasa Shikano

What exactly is this phenomenon we call evolution?

Many would confidently assert it's the process by which living beings ascend to superiority through the inexorable "law" of survival of the fittest... A notion so ingrained that few would dare question it.

And yet, this isn't evolution at all.

This perception is nothing more than a colossal misunderstanding, a conflation of evolution's subtle dance with the march of progress. Moreover, the concepts of survival of the fittest and the strong devouring the weak have long existed as indigenous European cultural ideas, unrelated to the true theory of evolution.

So what, then, is the true face of evolution, stripped of its misconceptions?

It is the silent, inexorable change that organisms undergo across the vast expanse of time. There are no value judgments here, no better or worse. In modern evolutionary theory, incorporating systematics, molecular biology, and population genetics, evolution is distilled to its essence: merely "heritable change."

Darwin's revolutionary insight, the crown jewel of his theory, was the realization—born from meticulous observation of nature's intricate workings—that the outdated law of the jungle is but a fairy tale, absent from the true theater of life.

Darwin's theory posits that organisms evolve through natural selection. This means organisms change to fit their natural surroundings. As the environment changes, those best suited to it are selected, and organisms evolve. In other words, biological change occurs passively, contrary to the competitive principle of the strong devouring the weak.

Lamarck's evolutionary theory, in contrast, painted organisms as the masters of their own destiny, changing into what they yearned to become. Like giraffes elongating their necks to reach higher foliage, this view sees evolution as an active process.

The popular conception of evolutionary theory is, in truth, the impostor known as Social Darwinism. Despite bearing Darwin's name, it's a changeling, far removed from his authentic theory. Its proponents argued that since biological evolution is driven by the crucible of struggle for survival of the fittest, conflict in human society must be not only inevitable but beneficial. This twisted logic was seized upon by late 19th century American capitalists, weaponized to justify the exploitation of workers, thus sowing the seeds of misunderstanding that would bloom into the common misconception of evolutionary theory.

Now, with this premise, let's consider human evolution and Newtypes.

The most striking feature that sets primates—our evolutionary kin—apart from the menagerie of life is the sheer magnitude of their brains. Primates boast brains twice as large relative to body weight as other mammals. The great apes, our closest cousins, possess truly titanic minds; a chimpanzee's brain outweighs that of similar-sized mammals by a factor of five. Humans, the pinnacle of this trend, sport brains ten times larger than expected.

Moreover, the pace of brain weight increase, from Australopithecus to modern humans, has tripled in just 3 million years. This is considerably faster than the general rate of evolution.

Consider this: while the human brain comprises a mere 2% of body weight in adults, it devours a staggering 20% of our energy intake. Such a voracious, disproportionately energy-hungry organ evolving at this breakneck pace demands explanation.

In the dawning days of the 1990s, a new star rose in the scientific firmament: evolutionary psychology. This discipline set out to unravel the mysteries of primate mental evolution through the twin lenses of ecological observation and analysis. Within this context, an intriguing theory to explain the enlargement of primate brains, including our own: the social brain hypothesis, also known by its other moniker, the Machiavellian intelligence hypothesis.

Proposed by British psychologists Richard Byrne and Andrew Whiten, this hypothesis defines that primates have large brains because we live in extremely complex social systems.

Examining the relationship between brain size and ecological characteristics across various primate species reveals little correlation with factors like diet or range of activity. The only correlation is with the size of social groups. In other words, among primates, the larger the brain, the larger the basic social group size.

Incidentally, the most distinctive feature of primate society is the existence of complex political maneuvering. Monkeys, our distant cousins, form intricate factions, a feat unmatched in the animal kingdom. While lions and other group-living creatures may forge alliances, these are but fleeting pacts born of immediate necessity.

Monkeys, however, can establish cooperative relationships months in advance, their simian minds projecting into possible futures. This prescience is built upon a foundation of detailed social knowledge—a mental rolodex of allies and adversaries.

The political arena of our primate kin is a funhouse mirror of human society. Monkeys who falter in aiding their faction during times of strife may later prostrate themselves in apology. Even in matters of the heart, our cousins show cunning: adulterous chimpanzees intentionally muffle their cries of passion, lest they betray their infidelity.

To perform these behaviors, monkeys must have the ability to infer others' minds – in other words, insight. Primates are animals that have developed insight to survive in complex societies.

To survive in society, aligning oneself with the most capable players is the surest path to success. Yet discerning these social juggernauts requires a mental calculus of staggering complexity. Nature's laws, by comparison, are an open book, their pages easily read with simple information processing. The labyrinthine world of social rules, however, demands a cognitive engine of unprecedented power. Thus, primates may have evolved their prodigious brains not to wrestle with the forces of nature, but to navigate the far more

challenging landscape of social complexity. Humans, with our sprawling civilizations and intricate social webs, represent the apotheosis of this trend—the very essence of the social brain hypothesis.

Human insight has developed to survive within social groups. While the examples given earlier were ironic, it's this insight that allows humans to understand others' feelings, to empathize and sympathize. It's also the skill behind our ability to be moved by great literature, art, and even watching sports. The ability that makes humans vividly human, for better or worse – that's insight.

Viewed this way, Newtypes can be seen as beings who have further advanced the evolutionary trend of insight that primates have followed. With their superior insight, they can probably engage in even more complex political maneuvering than oldtype humans. In other words, the triggers for wars in the space age might arise from the machinations of such Newtypes.

Yet, like two sides of a cosmic coin, Newtypes possess the capacity to understand each other with a depth that transcends ordinary human comprehension. These twin aspects of their nature—political cunning and profound empathy—are inextricably linked.

Since Zeta Gundam, Cyber-Newtype have appeared as counterparts to Newtypes. These beings, their abilities amplified through pharmacological and technological means, represent a form of eugenics taken to its logical extreme in the Gundam universe.

Eugenics, that controversial offspring of Social Darwinism, seeks to sculpt humanity into a form of perceived perfection by excising what it deems genetically inferior and elevating the supposedly superior. This ideology treads on ethically treacherous ground, its history stained with the atrocities of Nazi Germany, where it was wielded as a weapon to justify the sterilization and murder of the mentally ill and congenitally disabled, before being grotesquely expanded to rationalize the genocide of the Jewish people.

Yet, we must acknowledge that ethics are not immutable constants, unchanging across the vast expanse of time and space. If we accept as morally neutral a parent's desire for their child to excel, is it not conceivable that future generations might yearn to enhance their offspring's genetic makeup? This tantalizing possibility hints at a future where Lamarckian evolution—the inheritance of acquired characteristics—might become a reality for humanity.

But let us pause and consider: is this path not just ethically fraught, but fundamentally misguided?

Eugenics was born from the success of selective breeding in plants and animals. Improvements like increasing crop yields or strengthening resistance to specific diseases have been very successful in human history. Applying this method to humans themselves to create superior human breeds seems promising at first glance. Yet lurking beneath this seductive vision lies a chasm of fallacious reasoning.

The success of selective breeding hinges on clearly defined goals. However, such purposes cannot be set for human breeding. The very notion that we can define and pursue "human improvement" is a mirage, a self-deluding fantasy.

For instance, even if we want to endow superior qualities, what constitutes superiority varies greatly depending on the situation. If we're talking about improving intelligence, what does that mean? Is it IQ or memory?

A mind blessed with perfect recall might be cursed to relive every painful memory with crystal clarity, potentially spawning a generation prone to crippling depression and suicidal tendencies.

Breeding for heightened insight—the very quality that defines Newtypes—might inadvertently create a population of Char-like figures: brilliant but unstable, their enhanced perceptions teetering on the edge of delusion, forever at risk of spectacular self-destruction.

What we consider superior qualities are, after all, limited forms of excellence specific to certain times and environments.

Evolution has moved in the direction of increasing variation, and this seems to be an inevitable change as long as life continues. This is life itself, and Newtypes were the forerunners of humanity's descendants, diversifying to fit the new environment of space.

On the other hand, Cyber-Newtype represent a narrowing of human potential, an attempt to confine the boundless possibilities of our future within the straitjacket of our limited present-day understanding. This misguided endeavor stands in direct opposition to the fundamental nature of evolution, a Sisyphean struggle against the very forces that have shaped life since its inception.