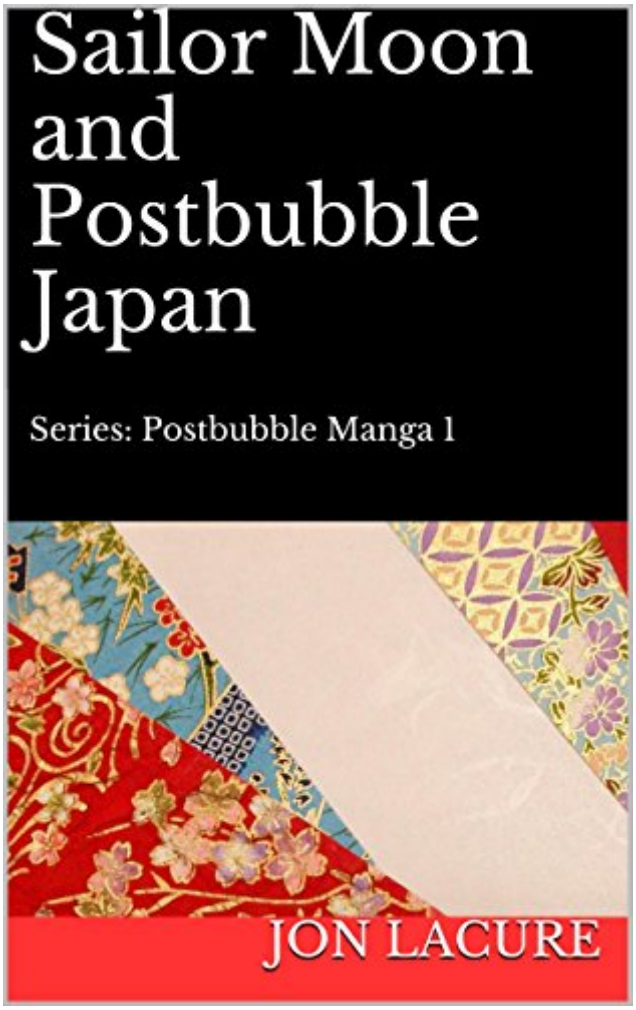
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Sailor Moon And Postbubble Japan: Postbubble Manga 1



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Synopsis

When the Japanese bubble burst in 1991, so did the promise of a good life for those who followed the rules. Restructuring meant the beginning of the end of guaranteed lifetime employment, the traditional backbone of the modern Japanese economic system. The picture is complex but many workers, especially in middle management, were either dismissed or demoted into jobs with reduced responsibilities and pay. Workers who had given their adult lives to Japanese companies felt justifiably betrayed. More importantly, young people lost faith in a system that had betrayed their fathers. It was not long before the shock of this change moved from the news media to the popular media. Graphic novelists began producing works that parodied the old genres. There was a deadly samurai assassin with orange bouffant hair tied with a red ribbon, a pirate captain who couldnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t swim, and a Ã¢â ¬Å“juvenile delinquentÃ¢â ¬Â• ninja. Takeuchi Naoko's superheroine graphic novel, Sailor Moon, was one of the first of these subverted graphic novels (manga).There are two chapters and an introduction in this book. The first chapter is background material analyzing various critical approaches to the female superhero. It begins with Wonder Woman but focuses primarily on Cutey Honey, a female superhero who shares many of the problematic aspects of her Western counterparts. The second chapter is on Sailor Moon, the first postmodern and postbubble Japanese female superhero. Instead of a tomboy rivaling men in her athletic prowess, Takeuchi NaokoÃ¢â ¬â„¢s heroine is a Ã¢â ¬Å“cry babyÃ¢â ¬Â• obsessed with video games, shopping, and Ã¢â ¬Å“cuteÃ¢â ¬Â• older boys. Sailor Moon also celebrates the intentionally camp. As retro-pastiche tour de force, the graphic novel walks a tightrope between homage to the superheroine and subversion of the genreÃ¢â ¬â„¢s varied tropes. Set against Art Deco backgrounds, Sailor Moon and her elegant tuxedo-clad boyfriend exchange dialog as sharp, if not quite as sophisticated, as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. This chapter also looks at the same sex relationships in Sailor Moon, an aspect of the manga that has been somewhat controversial in the West. The relationships are placed into the context of the Japanese all female theater, the Takarazuka, and other models that Takeuchi used for her characters. Jon LaCure teaches Japanese language and literature courses at the University of Tennessee. He regularly teaches an introductory course on the contemporary Japanese graphic novel and animation in translation. He has also taught courses on CLAMP, Takahashi Rumiko, Japanese cyberpunk, and postbubble Japanese horror films.

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Customer Reviews

This ebook took me completely by surprise. Sailor Moon and Postbubble Japan is the first part in a series contextualizing and analyzing popular manga in the early 90s, and I appreciate that LaCure begins with Sailor Moon since it was instrumental in popularizing Japanese comics in the U.S. Lately, anime and manga studies are picking up in academia, and I think it’s strangely appropriate that LaCure’s own book is split into multiple volumes, much like the tankobon format that has become a manga convention. The book is clearly written, more for a mainstream cultural studies audience rather than the lofty critical theory crowd, but you’ll hear no complaints from me. I would feel just fine assigning this book to an undergraduate course as a supplement to Sailor Moon. It makes for a good read while running errands as well. I can’t wait to get a chance to read the next volume, which discusses CLAMP. Highly recommended!

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