

and thoughtful history of this multifaceted and successful businesswoman. Gerber portrays Handler as someone who could rise above corporate adversity. There are some areas in the book, though, where the mix of business history and Handler's history is less well organized. And in some instances, the author seems too sympathetic to Handler's shady business dealings. Some readers might argue that Gerber portrays Handler in a light similar to Handler's own autobiography. Gerber does an excellent job, however, of drawing from interviews conducted by Fern Field for a film that was never produced, and the author is thoughtful in her explanation of Handler's decision not to include the details of Ken's illness in her autobiography.

Barbie and Ruth contributes to the history of business, of women, and of technology by looking at one woman's rise up the corporate ladder long before many had such opportunities. The world's most iconic doll was not the only woman to leave an imprint in the toy industry and on corporate America.

—Susan Asbury, *Elizabethtown, PA*

The Japanification of Children's Popular Culture: From Godzilla to Miyazaki

Mark I. West, ed.

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Bibliographical references, indices. xi, 294 pp. \$45.00 paper. ISBN: 9780810851214

This collection of nineteen essays provides a helpful overview of several media—live-action films, *manga* (graphic novels), video

games, and film and television *anime* (animation)—including such related commercial products as collectors' cards and Hello Kitty items and their appearances in Japan and the United States. Interspersed throughout are some anecdotal essays relating experiences with Japanese media, and within the analytical pieces, several authors confess to being fans themselves as children and as adults.

A number of the pieces discuss the deep interplay between Japanese and U.S. texts. A brief article by Dale Pike on the film *Gojira* (1954) and its transformation to *Godzilla* (1956) for theatrical release in the United States opens the book. The essay provides some concise background and acts as a teaser for what is to come. In "The Allure of Anthropomorphism in Manga and Anime," Fred Patten notes the intercultural popularity of talking animals and argues postwar Japanese popular culture was particularly influenced by U.S. products. Patten describes several shows initiated by Japanese artists and companies that aired on American television. In one case, artist Osamu Tezuka animated *Jungle Emperor* for NBC, making numerous changes requested by the network. The series aired to U. S. audiences as *Kimba the White Lion* without notice of its Japanese manga origins. Jan Susina's jam-packed article takes a close look at many episodes of *Rugrats*, noting that the Reptar and Cynthia characters are parodies of Godzilla and Barbie, repackaged via Japan. In "Early Japanese Animation in the United States: Changing *Tetsuwan Atomu* to *Astro Boy*," Brian Ruh meticulously demonstrates that, from its very beginnings, Japanese anime often considered the export market. The localization of the second season of *Tetsuwan Atomu* for the U.S. market served

as a precursor for the anime that followed, which partly counters the argument that Japanese products airing in the United States are simply diluted.

Several essays investigate the variety of objects produced or licensed by Japanese corporations. Kathy Merlock Jackson describes the phenomenal popularity in the United States of Hello Kitty, a character designed and licensed by Sanrio Corporation beginning in 1974. She also briefly examines *kawaii* (cute) culture, which she states is pervasive for adults of both genders in Japan. Jackson also suggests American and Japanese children are tutored in consumerism through Sanrio products which make them feel mature because they can themselves buy inexpensively priced Hello Kitty items. I might add that this consumption behavior is reinforced by the cheapening of labor in the Asian countries where the Sanrio items are actually made. Two essays on Pokemon culture analyze the popular, parental, and educator responses to the cards, television series, video games, and the marketer's "Gotta catch 'em all" slogan and philosophy. Cary Elza explores the ways children can become experts and exclude adults in the Pokemon realm. Relying on the theories of psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, Mark Pizzato writes, "Given the virtual realities and interactive demands of postmodern life, with its many mirror stages and screens, such training of wild monsters in the child's pocket becomes a valuable learning tool" (p. 82). Arguing that Pokemon culture may reinforce aggression, capitalism, and consumerism, Pizzato nonetheless concludes there are educational benefits of kids playing with Pokemon, including practice in math, puzzle-solving, and reading.

A pair of articles focuses on video games. Joe Wezorek provides an overview of games from 1980 to the early 2000s in "Japanese Dominance of the Video-Game Industry and the Future of Interactive Media." Wezorek believes Japanese game-designing studios consistently demonstrate more willingness to explore and innovate, whereas American studios simply take a blockbuster mentality borrowed from the film industry. His argument may well describe U.S. studios, which are averse to pushing genre and gender boundaries, but it does not adequately describe current independent game developers, who distribute their works without help from large publishers (using, for example, Valve's Steam Web site). Derek A. Burrill analyzes design elements and modes of play in video games marketed for children and for adults, using *Jet Set Radio* (2001 Sega) as a prime example for transforming young players into "digital transnational citizen(s)" (p. 116). "The anxieties and desires produced and reproduced in video games mark cultural shifts as technological objects *par excellence*" (p. 111), writes Burrill as he explores two design styles: the first is influenced by Tezuka, with characteristics such as "soft, bright, cute, child, nature, feminine." The second is influenced by Techno style and includes "hard, dark, sleek, adult, technology, masculine" characteristics (p. 110). According to Burrill, *Jet Set Radio* melds these two styles.

Some chapters study anime fans. Brent Allison interviews and discusses twelve fans aged thirteen to eighteen. One, he notes, is African American, and the remaining eleven are Caucasians, which, he states, fairly accurately represents the anime fan base in America. Antonia Levi

briefly discusses the genre called *yaoi* in North America, i.e. gay male romances usually written by women and largely read by girls and women. Levi then analyzes her 2003 online survey of *yaoi*, which gathered responses from 370 women, 43 men, and 18 people who identified themselves as other (transgender). In addition, Levi also examines the attempts of American television to erase homosexual couples in anime, so that, in the case of *Sailor Moon*, a lesbian couple became close cousins and one male character in a gay couple was dubbed over in English by a woman. Without formerly interviewing fans but by talking with his students, Hiroaki Hatayama also tries to determine why people in the United States find manga and anime so appealing. Hatayama cites scholars who find great variety, depth, and characterization in manga and anime. He argues that because the Japanese Ministry of Education requires teachers to help develop a student's individual character, manga and anime are meant to serve children as role models.

Perhaps in response to charges that anime is too violent and too sexualized, one article concludes that providing "authentic" Japanese texts is an unalloyed good and that editing or dubbing them are problematic. Analyzing the anime series *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* (1986–1996), Rieko Okuhara examines differences between the Japanese and U.S. broadcast versions. Japanese broadcasts include the cultural norms regarding sexuality and violence, but U.S. studios and networks are more apt to "censor" sexuality and edit images and dialogue accordingly. Okuhara's concludes "American children are smart enough to digest Japanese animation programs" (p. 207),

which assumes that changes are made in order to censor content. In a chapter that meticulously shows how readers with different cultural backgrounds may interpret the same work, Nicole Farrell examines the visual grammar of the anime series *Inu Yasha* and discusses cultural content from the American viewers' point of view (who the author assumes are not aware of certain Japanese cultural figures and myths). Some American viewers of Japanese descent or students of Japanese culture may understand the tropes the anime references. Exploring the reasons children in the United States enjoy Japanese products, Farrell argues anime offers more complexity than American cartoons. Characters in Japanese anime stories, for example, more frequently change rather than remain static as many of the American-made characters do.

Many of the articles mention what kids learn through their interactions with the texts, and a couple of the essays explicitly address the question. Discussing the *shojo* (girl's) manga *Cardcaptor Sakura*, created by four women artists, Bill Ellis explains that its incorporation of the Western fairy tale "The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods" in a key episode also resonates with Japanese audiences familiar with a similar Japanese folktale. Ellis argues that adolescent girls learn from *Cardcaptor Sakura* to "face puberty with courage and acceptance of their own sexual identity" (p. 265). In "Anima and *Anime*: Environmental Perspectives and New Frontiers in *Princess Mononoke* and *Spirited Away*," Nathalie op de Beek champions Hayao Miyazaki's films because they "do not deny that young viewers have hard ethical decisions ahead of them" (p. 275). Analyzing the plots, she finds these two films "depict the horror

and tragedy of human progress and the easy violence done to new generations of children who incorporate and perpetuate hostile economies. But these films also imply and politicize hope” (p. 280).

As a whole, the book effectively illustrates often mutually beneficial networks connecting Japanese and American products from the 1950s to the early 2000s. It

provides helpful introductions to manga, film and television anime, and video games; discusses how they are related; analyzes a variety of the more popular series; and may be of special interest to educators.

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