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Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime

Mark W. MacWilliams
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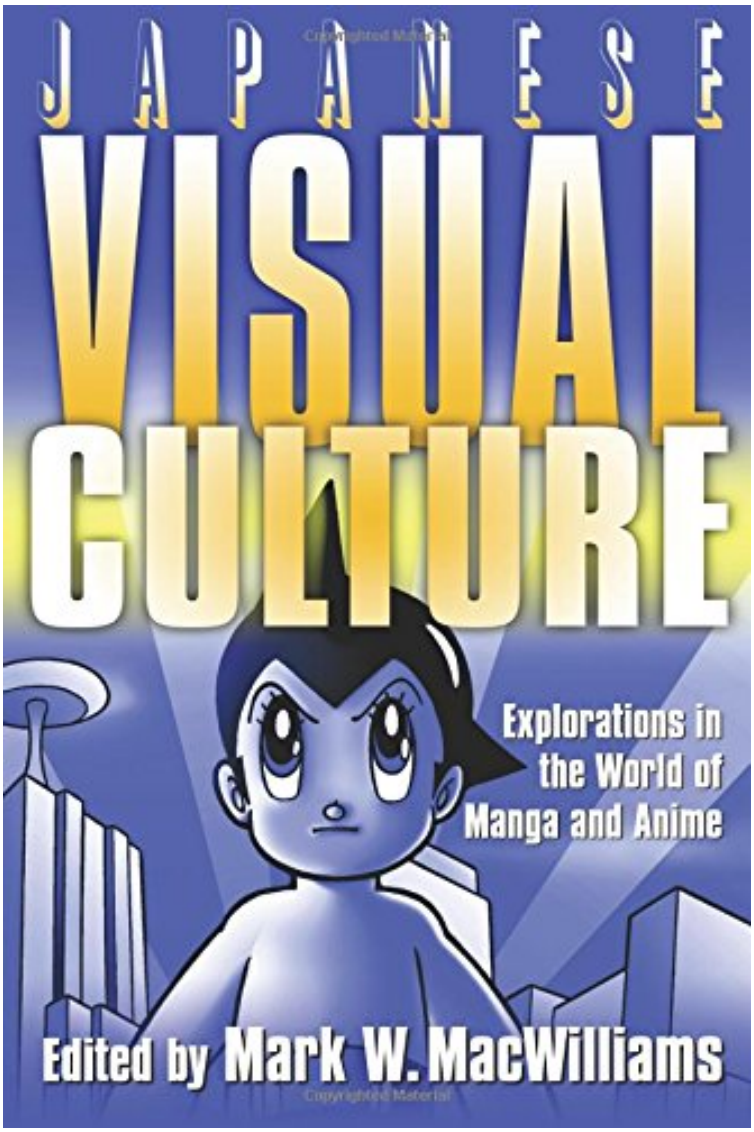

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in terms of the expansive area with which MacWilliams covers the topic of Japanese Visual Culture is enough to warrant kudos. This book collects writers from across the globe to comment on Japanese visuals, aesthetics, and media from before the world knew of Hokusai's views of Mount Fuji all the way up to computer-generated animation in films like Ghost in the Shell 2.However, this book does not merely cover the historicity of Japanese visual culture but how it has impacted gender relations, politics, international relations, and cultural identity.While this book does tend to get bogged down in certain areas through repetition in multiple articles (how much do we really need to hear about the changes Shojo manga brought to the industry or how Osamu Tezuka is the founder of modern manga and anime?) the book is a great foundational piece for anyone looking to further their own studies on the subject of Japanese visual culture.

Born of Japan's cultural encounter with Western entertainment media, manga (comic books or graphic novels) and anime (animated films) are two of the most universally recognized forms of contemporary mass culture. Because they tell stories through visual imagery, they vault over language barriers. Well suited to electronic transmission and distributed by Japan's globalized culture industry, they have become a powerful force in both the mediascape and the marketplace.This volume brings together an international group of scholars from many specialties to probe the richness and subtleties of these deceptively simple cultural forms. The contributors explore the historical, cultural, sociological, and religious dimensions of manga and anime, and examine specific sub-genres, artists, and stylistics. The book also addresses such topics as spirituality, the use of visual culture by Japanese new religious movements, Japanese Goth, nostalgia and Japanese pop, "cute" (kawali) subculture and comics for girls, and more. With illustrations throughout, it is a rich source for all scholars and fans of manga and anime as well as students of contemporary mass culture or Japanese culture and civilization.