# 30 Years Later, Re-Examining the "Pretty Soldier":

## A Gender Study Analysis of *Sailor Moon*

## **Cassandra Yatron**

## Abstract

December 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of Naoko Takeuchi's *Bishojo Senshi Sailor Moon* (*Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*) manga (1991-1997), and March 2022 marked the 30th anniversary of Toei Animation's *Bishojo Senshi Sailor Moon* anime (1992-1997). While there seems to be controversy over whether *Sailor Moon* can be read as a feminist text, *Sailor Moon* still maintains its status as a feminist and queer magical girl series. Although there has been some scholarship on the magical girl genre and gender roles in manga and anime, there has not been much written about *Sailor Moon* in recent years that examines feminism and queerness in the series as a whole. As an influential series that is relevant in pop culture and enjoyed by girls, further analysis of the manga and anime is necessary to identify its feminist and queer nature due to changes in how American society views gender and sexuality. Despite being three decades old, *Sailor Moon* maintains its status as a feminist and queer magical girl series. My argument, then, is that on the surface, the *Sailor Moon* franchise appears to be a heteronormative and an (arguably) antifeminist series with traditional heterosexual relationships and gender stereotypes, but upon closer examination, the manga and anime series subvert patriarchal and gender stereotypes in both obvious and discrete ways.

**Keywords**: Sailor Moon, gender, queer, feminism, magical girl

**Author Bio:** Cassandra Yatron is a PhD student at the University of Texas at Arlington, focusing on gender studies, pedagogy, and American literature. She will be graduating in 2026.

**Introduction**

     Manga and anime have been criticized extensively for not only how female characters are portrayed and objectified by artists but also for how those characters are objectified by viewers. Saito Tamaki's *Beautiful Fighting Girl*[1] and Sharalyn Orbaugh's "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture"[2] dissect the relationship between the female hero and the viewer in shojo[3] series, which both scholars conclude is misogynistic. However, in *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, Kathryn Hemmenn addresses how critics tend to focus on male consumers and determine that the female consumer can only view texts through the male gaze. Thus, her analysis looks at familiar girls' series, like *Sailor Moon*, through the female gaze, finding empowering, feminist messages for female consumers. My analysis in this paper will continue Hemmenn's work.

     In her introduction, Hemmenn shares anecdotes about herself and other women who watched *Sailor Moon* as children and were thus influenced to pursue careers in art, comics, or, like herself, academia.[4] She notes how the female characters in *Sailor Moon* are not simply "sex objects or empty symbols or vanguards of consumer culture or escapist fantasies" but complex girls, like her, who had dreams, trivial problems at school, and silly fights with their friends.[5] The complexity of the characters and their viewers has developed over many years. Despite the age of the series, fans are still dedicated and "explicitly associat[e] the franchise with feminist ideologies and queer rights activism." [6] With the recent 30th anniversary of Takeuchi Naoko's *Bishojo Senshi, Sailor Moon* (*Pretty Soldier, Sailor Moon*) manga (1991-1997) and the 30th anniversary of Tōei Animation's *Bishojo Senshi, Sailor Moon* anime (1992-1997), *Sailor Moon*

deserves a feminist reevaluation as an influential manga and anime for female readers and viewers.

Contemporary magical girl anime series, such as *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* or even *Kill La Kill*, have ushered in a new feminist, queer phase of the magical girl genre that may cause *Sailor Moon* to appear outdated and anti-feminist due to the female lead's frequent sacrifices, the heterosexual romances, and the sexual objectification of the Sailor Scouts compared to newer series.[7] However, I argue that *Sailor Moon* still maintains its status as a feminist and queer magical girl series. Although there has been some scholarship on the magical girl genre and gender roles in manga and anime, there has not been much written about *Sailor Moon* in recent years that examines feminism and queerness in the series as a whole since a great deal of the scholarship focus mostly on Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune's queerness.[8]

Critics believe that shojo anime and manga reinforce gender and sexual norms, but at the same time, they also give space for girls to explore their gender and sexuality.[9] *Sailor Moon* embodies this, with fans that span across ages, races, sexualities, and genders who use the series to enjoy and explore aspects of gender and queerness. In 2014, Viz Media released a new English dubbing of the anime on Hulu that followed the original Japanese script more closely than the 1990's DiC dubbing that censored content. Since Hulu is a widely available streaming app, *Sailor Moon* is now more accessible to young female viewers. As an influential series that is relevant in pop culture and enjoyed by girls, further analysis of the manga and anime is necessary to identify its feminist and queer nature due to changes in how American society views gender and sexuality. My argument, then, is that on the surface, the *Sailor Moon* franchise appears to be a heteronormative and an (arguably) antifeminist series with

traditional heterosexual relationships and gender stereotypes, but upon closer examination, the manga and anime series subvert patriarchal and gender stereotypes in both obvious and discrete ways. Sailor Moon, the character, defies patriarchal expectations of teenage girls by being an average, silly schoolgirl who can take charge and save the universe. Furthermore, *Sailor Moon*, the manga and anime series, resists norms by blending tropes of boys' and girls' stories, placing the series in a liminal space. As a series for girls, Sailor Moon's strength comes from her homosocial relationships, instead of through a romance with a man. Finally, as a visual medium, *Sailor Moon* takes a traditionally fetishized sailor school uniform and turns it into an empowering garment for girls. Sailor Moon demonstrates a way for girls to celebrate their bodies and sexuality as a self-declared "pretty soldier" who saves the world.

Before beginning this analysis, it is important to note that the original manga series was written and drawn by Takeuchi Naoko, a woman, but the anime adaptation, while based on the manga, was adapted and drawn by mostly male production teams at Toei Animation. To expand the 60-chapter manga series, Toei Animation added approximately 200 anime episodes and movies with staff-    created plotlines. This adds layers of the male gaze to a series written for girls by a woman; however, not all the changes made by the male team were sexist or misogynistic. Some of their changes, such as their changing of season one's finale, I will argue were empowering to the Sailor Scouts.

**Usagi/Sailor Moon**

*Sailor Moon* tells the story of Usagi Tsukino, a 14-year-old reincarnated moon princess, who fights evil aliens in Tokyo under the disguise of Sailor Moon. Accompanying her are her closest friends—the Sailor Scouts: Sailor Mercury, Sailor Mars, Sailor Jupiter, and Sailor Venus—who are also reincarnated princesses of their titular planets. Usagi's love interest, Tuxedo Kamen, occasionally helps her save the universe, but mostly, he is the person she has to rescue from danger, bring back to life, or heal from brainwashing. As the seasons progress, Sailor Scouts from further planets, galaxies, and stars join the team, including Usagi's daughter from the future.

Sailor Moon is part of the shojo genre, which are stories for girls. According to Grace En-Yi Ting, the shojo genre is considered a lower art form than the shonen genre, stories directed towards boys, due to feminine elements, such as a focus on emotions, romance, and friendship.[10] In Japanese media, the shojo, or girl, is traditionally characterized as a carefree young girl who is obsessed with everything cute, or kawaii, and loves to shop. Behind the stereotype are an ambivalence towards the shojo for her consumerism and her, assumed, desire to avoid being a "productive member of Japanese society."[11] In light of this, Gunhild Borggreen incorporates ideas from anthropologist Sharon Kinsella who notes that the shojo's obsession with kawaii and consumer culture is a form of resistance to growing up and becoming the ideal domestic housewife that Japan was promoting during the 1990s.[12] The shojo is both the consumer of the media as well as the main character of the media, and Usagi embodies the idea of the typical shojo, as stated in the work of anthropologist, Anne Allison.[13] The series begins with Usagi yelling that she is late for school. Since she arrives late, she has to stand in the hallway where she tries to sneak some of her lunch, but her teacher berates

her for failing her English test instead. The panels show Usagi as a cute, carefree girl,

complete with adorable facial expressions, bunnies, and hearts (Figures 1 & 2).



Figure 1. Usagi's introduction, demonstrating her shojo nature. She is a regular teenager who is usually late to school. Drawing by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011).



Figure 2. Usagi's personality shows through the page as a girl who enjoys "the little things" in life, such as a food. She is carefree, despite being in trouble with her teacher. Drawing by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011).

In her work, Allison cites Japanese feminist commentator, Minomiya Kazuko,

who in 1994, offered an optimistic view of shojo manga and anime, stating that it

reflected "girls' fantasies today" and also represented "a positive shift in gender

reality."[14] In the shojo genre, girls are able to have romance, a career, and opportunity,

and this is seen in reality as well. However, some critics argue that the way gender is

portrayed in the shojo genre is detrimental for young viewers. Popular culture scholar,

Sharalyn Orbaugh, argues that the girl hero potentially has power but "ultimately

reinscribe[s] hegemonic and hetero-centric sex/gender/sexuality ideologies, obviating much of the promise of resistance or social transformation."[15] Although there are some scenarios where the series may falter, I would argue that *Sailor Moon* subverts "hegemonic and hetero-centric sex/gender/sexuality ideologies" through its depictions of how the characters act in relation to sexual and gender stereotypes. For example, Usagi subverts the stereotype of the shojo by being a carefree schoolgirl in her daily life; however, when duty calls, she uses those shojo qualities to defeat her enemies.

     In the manga and the anime, Usagi uses the "Disguise Pen," a pen that can give her a new outfit and skills (Figure 4). For example, in Act III of the manga, Usagi is chasing a bus and turns into a stewardess (Figure 5) "[b]ecause it is the duty of a stewardess to ensure that all passengers have a safe trip!!" [16] She changes into a mini pencil skirt, a jacket with a huge bow in the front, a cute flight attendant's hat, and high



Figure 3. Using the Disguise Pen. Drawing by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011).

Figure 4. The result of using the pen. Drawing by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011).

heels. Changing into a flight attendant's uniform does not cause Usagi to run faster or gain a skill in this case, but wearing the uniform and knowing the stewardess' responsibility to protect the passengers helps her find the inner strength to face her fears of the "demon bus" by "playing pretend." She wants to protect innocent people, and she does whatever is necessary to do that. The shojo cares about material goods like clothes and being cute, but wearing the cute uniform gives Usagi power. Overall, then, she is a shojo, but she has great depth of character underneath that shallow veneer.

Usagi's shojo characterization and "very ordinariness" is what Minomiya argues makes her a positive role model for both female and male fans.[17] Usagi is the heart of the series and the reason for its popularity. Even though the Sailor Scouts save the world on a regular basis, they also attend cram school, worry about academics, date boys, and enjoy shopping.[18] An average girl can become a hero, too. Orbaugh counters this idea by noting that magical girls are not often human (Sailor Moon is technically an alien princess from the moon), so "there is no possibility that a real-world girl could realistically aspire to emulate characters who are android or alien."[19] While her point is valid and none of us can ever become a Moon princess, many viewers can relate to being an average person who is called to take on responsibilities they may not feel ready for. Japanese author, Saito Minako, states that "male heroes" are generally "focused and flawless from the beginning" and are "both willing and expected to sacrifice everything to the job of superhero," just like the stereotype of the Japanese businessman.[20] Usagi, however, is reluctant to take on the role of superhero because she just wants to be a normal girl, but, like Saito's male hero, she frequently sacrifices herself in order to save the universe, which will be explored more in a future section.[21]

For example, in Act I of *Pretty Guardian, Sailor Moon*, [22] Usagi transforms into Sailor Moon to save her best friend, Naru, from a monster, but when the monster poses a threat, Sailor Moon literally cries, "Why do I have to suffer like this?! I can't take this! I'm going home!"[23] In Act II, she introduces herself by saying, "I'm Usagi Tsukino. 14-years-old, in the 2nd year of middle school. My hobbies are eating, sleeping, and taking the easy way out. I'm a normal, cute, bit of a crybaby young girl...Or, I **should** be, but...I went and became a Guardian of Justice, and it's all the fault of this talking cat, Luna. **Honestly**! I just can't believe it!" [emphasis in original][24] Usagi begrudgingly takes on the role of Sailor Moon, even though she just wants to be a "normal, cute" girl. Eventually, she grows up and becomes the queen of the Crystal Tokyo, but she still maintains her shojo aesthetic. Future Usagi writes a letter to herself in the past, which includes little hearts and a kawaii self-portrait, showing that even as the omnipotent queen of the galaxy, she is still herself (Figure 5). Hemmann sums up Usagi's character well by saying, "Despite being young and naïve, she is physically strong, emotionally competent, and a compelling leader. She sacrifices herself for her team and always achieves strategic insight into the motivations of her enemies. Her magical power and her ability to win every battle stem from her innocent spirit and her purity of heart." [25] Throughout the years, Usagi learns, grows, and becomes more powerful with every series, and as a relatable character, her growth presents a positive role model for fans as they grow and mature.

Figure 5. A letter from future Sailor Moon to herself in the past, complete with the shojo aesthetic of cute hearts and drawings. Drawing by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 5*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2012).

## Between Boys' and Girl's Country

When the *Sailor Moon* manga was initially released in Japan, the series was praised by Japanese critics due to the complexity of the storyline and of the characters. The series, however, was not a guaranteed success in the U.S. due to the fact that it was for girls. In 1994, after the success of *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers* in the U.S., Bandai America wanted to bring over additional animations for Saturday morning cartoons with *Kamen Rider* (*Masked Rider)*, *Dragonball Z*, and *Sailor Moon*. Of the three, *Sailor Moon* was considered the riskiest because not only was it marketed solely towards a female fanbase, but because it was an action show where the female protagonists fight and look pretty while doing it. At the time, action cartoons were marketed towards boys and "fashion/romance/friendship" cartoons were marketed towards girls.[26] *Sailor Moon* effortlessly incorporates all these elements of fashion,

romance, friendship, and action, which blurs the lines of where it falls as a series for girls or for boys; thus, it was treated with hesitation.

The series' blurring of gender norms is important because, as Japanese author Saito Minako notes in *Kōittenron*, or *The One Red Flower Theory*, Japanese texts label content in terms of whether it is "girl's country" or "boy's country," and those labeled texts are similar to how boys' and girls' stories are distinguished in Western literature. Translated into English by Anne Allison, Saito elaborates that "boy's country" stories feature a boy who trains to become a hero in order to fight monsters and enemies, while "girl's country" stories are the typical "rags-to-riches" tale, where a girl meets a royal prince or king who marries her. *Sailor Moon* blurs the dichotomy between these genres and does not fit in either box. Usagi is the princess who trains to become a hero and slay monsters. Saito, however, insists that *Sailor Moon* is still in "girls' country" because of the tropes presented in the series. Boys' stories focus around "science, technology, and nationalism," while girls' stories focus on "magic, dreams, and interpersonal relations."[27] Orbaugh cites "high technology" as a "male-associated element" that is blended with female narratives in order to help male viewers connect to the female characters.[28] While this may be the case in male-written texts, Takeuchi's text normalizes girls being skilled in technology, math, and science. For example, Sailor Mercury uses magic to fight, but she also has a small computer built into her tiara that allows her to research and analyze to fight the aliens (Figure 6). Many of the female characters are also in traditionally male roles, such as Sailor Mercury as a science and math prodigy, Sailor Mercury's mother as a doctor, and a side character as an archaeologist, showing women working and thriving in the sciences. *Sailor Moon* normalizes girls' proficiency in technology and science, which Hemmenn notes

influenced many women in North America to pursue careers in traditionally male

fields.[29]



Figure 6. Sailor Mercury's computer goggles
blending "boy's" and "girl's" tropes. Drawing by
Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 4*,
(New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2012).

      Saito Minako also notes that the gendered genres have opposite tropes and

ideological messages, which puts *Sailor Moon* strictly in "girl's country." Male heroes

save the world by "working hard and utilizing one's powers to a collective, social end for

which a warrior is willing to sacrifice even his life," and female heroes save the world to

protect "treasured things," which is usually a veiled metaphor for virginity or

sexuality.[30] While Saito's analysis does apply to an aspect of season one, not every

storyline involves a "treasured thing." In season one, the villains, Queen Beryl and

Queen Metalia, are trying to find the Silver Crystal, which is one of the most powerful

artifacts in the universe that can restore destroyed planets, defend against evil, and

bring people back from the dead. Sailor Moon's mother from a past life, Queen Serenity,

used the Silver Crystal as the source of her power, and when Usagi was reincarnated, it

became her source of power. Since the villains are looking for the Silver Crystal, Saito claims that this is the "treasured thing" that Usagi is protecting. However, the search for the Silver Crystal is only part of the plotline for the series since Sailor Moon has to stop Queen Metalia from conquering Earth.

In Allison's analysis of *Sailor Moon* using Saito Minako's theory, she does not address the complexity of storylines in the series either. She does, however, note how *Sailor Moon* includes the male ideological message of "utilizing one's powers to a collective, social end," but she does not explore the concept enough. Allison cites the film, *Sailor Moon R*, as an example of where Sailor Moon demonstrates characteristics similar to that of a male hero and rescues, her love, Tuxedo Kamen, "who spends most of the plot limp and unconscious," while focusing on friendship and interpersonal connectedness, unlike the "boys' country" stories.[31] Allison neglects to note that this accurately summarizes the plot of every *Sailor Moon* series, film, or musical. In fact, the other Sailor Scouts as well as Sailor Moon sacrifice themselves for each other and to save the world. In Act XIII and XIV of the manga *Pretty Guardian, Sailor Moon*, Sailor Moon kills Tuxedo Kamen with a sword for the second time because he was brainwashed by Queen Beryl, the antagonist of this season. After she kills him, she turns the sword on herself and kills herself because she believes that she must repeat the actions of their past lives. Her tears reveal the Silver Crystal that was hidden within her all along. The Sailor Scouts, die after they pull together all their power to bring her and Tuxedo Kamen back from the dead,[32] which is an idea found in boys' stories where the hero "work[s] hard and utilize[s] one's powers to a collective, social end for which a warrior is willing to sacrifice even his life."[33] Once she is reborn, Sailor Moon has her power from the Silver Crystal and the power of the Sailor Scouts and destroys Queen

Beryl with the help of Tuxedo Kamen, which takes all their power, and she dies again.[34]

Sailor Moon is not fighting for "love" or "treasured things"; she is fighting to save the

universe, which seems like a "collective social end." Additionally, the anime writers use

the Silver Crystal to collectively empower the Sailor Scouts. When Usagi finds the Silver

Crystal, she gains infinite power, which spreads to the other Sailor Scouts providing

them with stronger attacks and weapons. In every season, Sailor Moon "powers up" and

gains stronger attacks, and that power always spreads to the Sailor Scouts. Instead of

the hero being overpowered as some male heroes are, like in *Dragonball* and

*Dragonball Z*, Sailor Moon's power spreads to her friends making the group stronger for

a collective end. Interestingly, Tuxedo Kamen never gains power from Sailor Moon or

"powers up" in the series; he is a static character, which identifies girls as the ones who

change and gain power from each other. Thus, the plotline of the manga and anime

series blends the tropes and ideologies of both girls' country and boy's country with the

elements of action, sacrifice, and friendship, rewriting gender stereotypes.

Furthermore, Sailor Moon's title, *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, alone blends

gendered ideology. By titling the series *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, Takeuchi is playing

with stereotypes and expectations by blending male and female ideas together. While

"soldier" does not exclusively refer to males, the word connotes war, battles, fighters,

and violence, which are traditionally entertainment genres marketed to men and boys.

For example, in the 1980s and 1990s, the G.I. Joe was a popular toy and TV show

directed at boys, making G.I. Joe the iconic American soldier at the time of *Sailor Moon*.

In the 1990s DiC dubbing of *Sailor Moon*, the girls were called the "Sailor Scouts,"

instead of Sailor Soldiers, and in Kodansha Comics 2011 translation of the manga and in

Viz Media's 2014 subtitling and dubbing of the anime for Hulu, they exchanged the

word "soldier" for the term "guardian" instead. In America, "soldier," "scout," and "guardian" are not synonymous. This deserves more research involving translation studies, but it seems a way to minimize the strength or power of the girls by calling them "scouts," like the Girl Scouts, instead of "soldiers." Scouts are observers and those who do reconnaissance, not the soldiers who are the warriors or fighters. Similarly, changing "soldier" to "guardian" has a similar effect, as "guardian" connotes a protector, not necessarily a fighter. By changing the word "soldier" to a less active/violent position like a scout or a guardian, the writers or adapters are arguably diminishing the impact and the non-heteronormativity of the pretty soldiers saving Tokyo on a weekly basis. To further make this point, Takeuchi calls them "pretty soldiers", which combines traditional male and female tropes. They are soldiers, but they are also girls who look "pretty" while killing aliens and saving the universe. Calling the girls "pretty sailor soldiers" is a purposeful choice to blend stereotypical ideology for boys and girls, causing the boundaries of gender to be blurred as well.

Gender is not set in clear boundaries, and Usagi happily inhabits a space between feminine and masculine. Just as Saito Minako states that boys' stories focus on justice, while girls' stories focus on love, Sailor Moon's tagline shows the blend of girls' and boys' countries. Using Lacanian psychoanalysis, Saito Tamaki theorizes that for the male viewer, the "beautiful fighting girl" represents a phallus.[35] The girl is beautiful but unaware of her own beauty, can fight the villains, and is completely unattainable. Takeuchi subverts this stereotype by having Sailor Moon know that she is attractive. When Sailor Moon transforms, she says, "I am the pretty guardian in a sailor suit! Guardian of love and justice! Sailor Moon."[36] She is not looking for a man to call her beautiful, and she is controlling the narrative. By declaring herself a "pretty soldier" who

fights for love and justice, she is claiming herself an attractive soldier. "Pretty" and
"soldier" seems to be a blending of male and female, and according to Saito, "love" is a
female value, while "justice" is a male value. In declaring herself a "pretty soldier" and a
"guardian of love and justice," she is not allowing herself to be restricted by traditional
gender expectations, showing that the shojo is more complex than assumed. Girls can be
soldiers, fight for justice, use technology, and push the boundaries of what a shojo is.
Sailor Moon celebrates her femininity and her masculine qualities as well, inhabiting an
interstitial space between genders, which is one of the reasons why she is a positive role
model for girls.

**Homosocial Relationships**

Sailor Moon defied shojo tropes in the 1990s by being, as Hemmann describes, "a
rare oasis of female characters not defined by their attachment to men or involvement in
romance." [37] While *Sailor Moon* effectively blends and blurs female and male cultural
ideology, interpersonal relationships and friendship, both homosocial and heterosocial,
are highlights of the series. Ting and Borggreen both cite Japanese critics, artist Hagio
Moto and art critic Matsui Midori respectively, who note that the shojo genre creates an
ideal world for girls that is "subversively feminine"[38] and the source of "all female power
hidden and untold."[39] *Sailor Moon* does not hide where female power comes from,
though; the source is homosocial relationships.

The shojo magical girl genre is appealing to both girls and boys due to the
shonen-style action and the "transformativity" of the shojo. Orbaugh compares female
action heroes, or as she calls them "battlin' babes," from 1990's anime to Carol Clover's
"final girl" from 1970s and 1980s slasher films.[40] Her "busty battlin' babes" are similar
to the final girls who survive horror films with their typically gender-neutral names,

their sexual inactivity, their androgynous wardrobe and haircuts, and their level-headedness, which she claims helps male viewers associate with the lead character. However, there are battlin' babes, such as *Sailor Moon* and *Cutey Honey*, who are "extravagantly feminine"[41] and arguably celebrate their femininity.[42] Since the shojo is in between childhood and adulthood, Orbaugh argues that the shojo is "associated with liminality, transformativity, and irresponsibility," resulting in young male viewers identifying with the characters.[43] The magical girl in particular "can exemplify male and female characteristics" by being a fighter but also still a girl.[44] As a form of escapism, boys may find shojo characters appealing as they approach adulthood and social responsibility, and male viewers who feel trapped in their lives or social roles can live in a fantasy world of transformation in magical girl series like *Sailor Moon*. Allison expands on Orbaugh's argument, claiming that postindustrial Japan is characterized by feelings of isolation, and *Sailor Moon* presents a vision of Tokyo where friendships are in abundance. She argues that with the rise of capitalism, Japanese culture has become competitive and isolated, but *Sailor Moon* creates a space where capitalism and consumerism are highlighted with the image of the shojo; ultimately, however, friendship and interconnectedness win over competition and consumerism.[45]

Usagi is not the smartest, the bravest, the most agile, nor the most talented Sailor Scout; Usagi's superpower is kindness. She can befriend anyone, and often turns villains into her friends, such as with the Spectre Sisters in *Sailor Moon R*, who help her save the universe.[46] Furthermore, Sailor Mercury, Sailor Mars, Sailor Jupiter, and Sailor Venus only became friends with each other because of Usagi. Each girl is isolated from society for a different reason (Mercury because of her intelligence, Mars because she is a Shinto priestess with foresight abilities, Jupiter because she is tall and strong, Venus

because she is an international spy), but Usagi sees them for who they are inside and befriends them.[47] This offers an enticing story for any lonely readers and viewers, who might lack close, quality friends. And according to the critics above, culture is rampant with audiences who might feel disconnected. Therefore, in regards to significance, friendship surpasses all other values in the series since the Sailor Scouts cannot defeat their enemies alone and their strength comes from the love between each other.

Values, such as friendship and love, are crucial to the genre of shojo. While shojo manga began as a mostly male industry, the field is now dominated by female artists writing for girls with "a commitment to acknowledging the desires and agency of girls and women as well as theorizing a unique homosocial space for community and expression."[48] During the 1970s, shojo writers began altering manga conventions by incorporating extensive inner dialogue and focusing on emotion. The artists also started drawing montage-like, full-    page layouts as well as flowery motifs on the panels. Male shojo writers mainly featured heteronormative romances, where the lead character did not have meaningful relationships with other girls.[49] As women started writing more, the shojo became celebrated as the "ideal girl" with virtues, such as innocence, purity, romantic longing, and the S relationship, which are brief romances between girls based on "spiritual" connections.[50] Ting states that shojo manga "shies away from depicting female sexual desire" and that it is "situated somewhere between performing in transgressive ways and reinforcing heteronormative standards," but this is where Sailor Moon deviates from the stereotypes of shojo.[51] The third season of *Sailor Moon* is called *Sailor Moon S*, which possibly means "super", as this is when Sailor Moon transforms into a more powerful version of herself with the Holy Grail, but this is also the season where Chibiusa, Sailor Moon's daughter from the future, begins her deep friendship

with Sailor Saturn, which fans theorize is romantic. Perhaps this could be an S relationship, and the title is referencing that. This is also the season that introduces Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune who are an openly queer couple deeply in love.[52] Within the fanbase, there are many "ships"[53] within the Sailor Scouts, such as Sailor Mercury x Sailor Jupiter and Sailor Mars x Sailor Venus, where fans believe that the girls have S relationships based on the intensity of feeling between them. *Sailor Moon* provides a queer space where fans can explore their own sexuality, which deserves more in-depth research.

   As for the platonic friendships between the Sailor Scouts, episodes 45 to 46 of the anime, which were adapted by a male team, have a more feminist message than that of the original manga. The anime culminates with Sailor Moon confronting Queen Beryl in a final battle alone because Sailor Mercury, Sailor Mars, Sailor Venus, and Sailor Jupiter have all died in previous battles so Sailor Moon can get to this point. To call upon their help to defeat Queen Beryl, Sailor Moon thinks about her friendship with the Sailor Scouts and their beliefs in love, in order to find the power within herself to save the universe. Here, Sailor Moon calls upon the spirits of her dead friends, which is distinctly different from the male hero who often works alone. For example, there is a moving moment where she is scared because she is alone, but she imagines her friends' hands grabbing her own and she knows that they are spiritually with her. Conversely, in the manga, Tuxedo Kamen is standing behind her to support her, which is powerful in its own right because he is not acting for her but standing with her. Unlike the stereotypical princess story where the prince saves the princess, Tuxedo Kamen cannot defeat Queen Metalia, only Sailor Moon can with her Silver Crystal. He does not question how she is

fighting or try to take control of the situation; he stands beside her to lend her his power and supports her as much as he can.

However, the power of the female friendship in this scene is more moving and striking in the anime to viewers struggling with loneliness, isolation, and social pressures.[54] Sailor Moon then kills Queen Beryl, sacrificing her life as well, which, again, is the common trope of the male hero.[55] Since the anime is over 200 episodes long and the manga is only 60 chapters, the anime has time to explore the relationships and personalities of all the girls. In almost every episode in every season, the Sailor Scouts are only able to win against their enemies by working together, and the gender of their enemies does not matter. For example, in the first season, Queen Metalia and Queen Beryl are the main villains, but in *Sailor Moon R*, Wiseman and Prince Diamond are the villains. This is not a sign of weakness, though. The series celebrates female friendships and the strength that women can gain from each other. Unlike the lone hero common in boys' manga and anime, Sailor Moon gains strength and support from her female friendships instead of solely from her romantic partner.

**The Sailor Suits**

As a visual medium, how gender and sexuality are represented in both the *Sailor Moon* manga and anime is significant. Within feminist, gender, and pop culture studies, the importance of varied and nuanced representation has been reiterated repeatedly. According to Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble*, the body appears to be a "passive medium that is signified by an inscription from a cultural source figured as 'external' to that body," but in fact, "gender is a kind of persistent impersonation that passes as the real."[56] Ideology shows men and women how to perform their gender. Furthermore, Susan Bordo states in "Unbearable Weight" that people are shown "what clothes, body

shape, facial expression, movements, and behaviors are required" to embody a particular gender, and media is one of the places where that ideology is diffused.[57] Sally McLaren agrees, noting that "[g]endered media messages, which include stereotypical and highly stylised normative images of femininities and masculinities, are ingrained in daily life,"[58] and Borggreen similarly argues that visual culture, which includes manga and anime, has real effects on viewers and consumers.[59] Thus, how gender and sexuality are portrayed in media and visual culture have real-life implications. They show people how to act in a culturally appropriate way according to their assigned gender. *Sailor Moon* is significant, here, then, because it is a prominent cultural artifact; thus, it is a conduit through which ideology is shared and shaped. McLaren argues that the way "characteristics of media-saturated Japan" interact with culture is damaging in ways that negatively affect women and those who identify as gender and sexually queer.[60] Within media, "patterns of marginalization, trivialization, and stereotyping" of women perpetuates gender inequality within.[61] *Sailor Moon*, then, could either support or undermine those negative patterns. I argue that it subverts those patterns through its nuanced representation of gender and gender norms.

Since much cultural ideology deals with gender and clothing, the uniforms in the series are important in this conversation. Thus, Sailor Moon's sailor suit is one of the most difficult aspects of the series to dissect, particularly because sailor school uniforms have a place within otaku culture as an object of fetishization. Heterosexual male anime and manga fans, called otaku, are stereotypically portrayed as obsessed men who sexually fetishize women and girls.[62] Otaku are assumed to be characterized by moe, a term used to describe "affection and possibly sexual arousal felt for fictional characters."[63] Moe aspects can be how the character is designed, but it can also be found

in the settings, the sounds of the characters, plot elements, or even the "curves of a figurine."[64] Anime and manga are filled with popular tropes that could support moe, such as maid costumes, glasses, Lolita fashion, animal hybrids, and, most importantly, the schoolgirl uniform. While some believe sexual attraction to a cartoon is perverted and deviant, Ting argues anime and manga create a space for this queer sexuality.[65] For the otaku though, moe can take on aspects of misogyny to subjugate female characters. The Sailor Scouts mostly wear their sailor suits and their sailor school uniforms throughout the series, which places the characters in a position to be objectified by readers/viewers.

Most critics tend to focus on the male gaze of male viewers and male creators.[66] As previously noted, Saito Tamaki theorizes that for the otaku, the "beautiful fighting girl" represents a phallus, who is the unobtainable object of his desire [67] She only exists as his fantasy and as his escape from everyday life. As referenced earlier, Orbaugh briefly notes that female viewers also perceive the beautiful fighting girl as an unobtainable goal for girls.[68] For male creators, Ting claims that strong female characters do not exist to serve their own agendas but to enhance the gratification of their (mostly) male creators. Thus, when written by men, the shojo is both the object of male desire and the Other that will disrupt family life and, in a more melodramatic perspective, the entire country of Japan.[69] Neither she nor Orbaugh, however, examine how the beautiful fighting girl exists to the female creator, but Ting does claim that the space exists for female authors to explore desires and agency.[70] It seems, then, that since *Sailor Moon* was written by a woman, the beautiful fighting girl has a different position in the narrative, but as the anime was adapted by men, there are layers of complications to the anime.

Before analyzing *Sailor Moon*'s sailor suits, I want to note Hemmann's argument about the importance of the female gaze in manga and anime. As a young girl who devoured the *Sailor Moon* anime, I was watching the show through a female gaze. This is important because, as Hemmann argues, consuming media created by women for women/girls that celebrates teenaged lives and sexuality can subvert patriarchal, misogynistic stereotypes. The shojo genre is appealing for its fantasy escapism and for its "self-reflexive enjoyment of being young, beautiful, magical, and sexually aware." [71] The Laura Mulvey-defined "male gaze" loses some of its power when women are drawing for women/girls.[72] The female gaze, Hemmann argues, "directly challenges the hegemony of the male otaku fan as a model of narrative production and consumption in contemporary Japan," which she thoroughly explains as the way companies produce media.[73] Hemmann is saying that feminist critics are giving the male gaze more power than it deserves when we assume that the female gaze is just women's way of internalizing the male gaze and identifying with male characters and viewers when objectifying female characters.[74] Since Sailor Moon was created by a woman for girls/women, Hemmann suggests that the male gaze is not as important when evaluating the series. Instead, she is suggesting that the female gaze is a way for female creators and viewers to celebrate teenaged bodies and "sexuality that lies outside of misogynistic stereotypes regarding femininity." [75] Male and female viewers will always objectify male and female characters, but I am arguing, as a female consumer of the series, the uniforms and sailor suits do not have to be a patriarchal tool to objectify the girls.

The male creators for the anime did add one aspect that has been criticized for objectifying the Sailor Scouts that should be discussed. As part of the bishojo hiro

(beautiful girl heroes) sub-genre, the girls use magic to transform into their sailor suits. The manga does not include transformation sequences, but in the anime, the transformations show the girls temporarily naked before gaining a new uniform. When nude, only their silhouettes are visible until they are fully clothed in the uniform, gloves, and shoes, but Allison cites Fujimoto Yukari, editor and shojo manga scholar, who criticizes the Sailor Scouts' transformations as "exciting" and "obscene" (inbi).[76] The transformation sequence is one of the changes made by male artists that is arguably not empowering and supports Ting's and Allison's critiques about shojo manga and anime created by male authors. While it may be a way for them to gratify their own sexual pleasure, the transformation sequences possibly served a second purpose. The anime was hand drawn, so by recycling the transformation sequence for each scout every episode, the artists could produce episodes quicker. Either way, the transformation sequences may be viewed as the male gaze exploiting their bodies.

However, the sailor suits that the Sailor Scouts transform into have also received some critique. Male heroes, like Kamen Rider, transform into a uniform with helmets and technology to fight villains. Unlike male heroes, Allison argues that "girl heroes tend to strip down in the course of empowerment, becoming more, rather than less, identified by their flesh."[77] In "Busty Battlin' Babes," Orbaugh analyzes magical girl series, such as the popular male-created *Cutey Honey*[78] and Takeuchi's *Sailor Moon*, and comments on how the magical girls are sexualized for the pleasure of the male gaze. She neglects to address the gender of Takeuchi and its influence the content and the (fe)male gaze.

For example on the Blu-Ray cover of the 2004 season of *Re:Cutie Honey* (Figure 7), Cutey Honey is posing with much of her breasts, midriff, and hips exposed, and her

curvy body shape looks more like an adult woman than a teenager. To the right of her naked body is her in her human disguise with blond hair, a low-cut white cropped top, and a miniskirt. Behind her is her post-transformation uniform, which is a revealing bodysuit with cut-outs and straps. *Cutey Honey* seems to align with Ting, Allison, Orbaugh's assertions that shojo characters drawn by men are not empowering for female viewers.

Conversely, on the cover of the 2011 *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon* manga (Figure 8), Sailor Moon is standing in her signature pose after her transformation. Her body is thinner and more like young girl's than Cutey Honey's body. In her miniskirt, her legs are exposed, but her breasts and torso are covered by her sailor suit. Allison argues that Sailor Moon is a sex icon with her short skirt, "cleavage," and long blond hair "that feeds and is fed by a general trend in Japan toward the infantilization of female sex objects."[79]



Figure 7. The cover of the 2004 season of *Cutie Honey*. Photo by asushinmisakaji. https://www.themoviedb.org/tv/95736-re?language=en-US
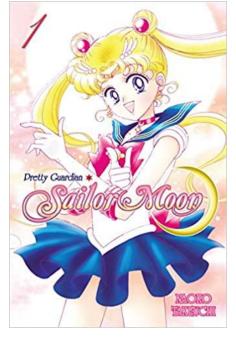
Figure 8. Cover of the 2011 *Sailor Moon* manga. Art by Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011).

Sailor Moon may be a sex icon, but it is clear that Sailor Moon's teenaged body is not presented the same way as a magical girl drawn by the male artists of *Cutey Honey*. Hemmann makes the strong argument that "[s]hallow characterization and short skirts alone, however, do not make a work inherently sexist." [80]  I argue that the female artist, Takeuchi, created a series where the female gaze empowers female artists and viewers by celebrating the female body in cute uniforms. Clothing and fashion become an empowering artifact for female readers/viewers.

Fashion is a major aspect of the *Sailor Moon* series, and the Sailor Scouts appreciate cute fashion and female beauty. When Usagi meets Sailor Jupiter, she notices her delicate rose earrings, and when she meets Sailor Mars, she comments on her striking beauty. Usagi uses the Disguise Pen to play pretend with fashion and different careers. Fashion and aesthetics extend to their sailor suits, which are stylized versions of a Japanese sailor school uniform. The sailor school uniform can be problematic and fetishized in manga and anime. Allison argues that the sailor uniform identifies the Sailor Scouts as sex objects for male and female viewers to lust after, as the uniform is used in society to project a "nymphet effect" in pornography and sex culture, where schoolgirls are engaging in "assisted dating" with businessmen.[81] However, Sailor Moon uses the sailor suit to be an object of female empowerment.

In *Manga Culture and the Female Gaze*, Hemmann cites fans who have found the sailor suits as an "empowering symbol of youthful femininity." [82] If manga and anime are a place of fantasy, by placing Sailor Moon's power in everyday object, fans are able to bring the fantasy closer to reality. It is important to remember that Usagi is a girl who wears a sailor uniform to school, and the series is aimed at girls who most likely wear a sailor uniform to school. Usagi's sailor suit is a version of her school uniform

with a similar color scheme (Figure 9). Like Usagi using the Disguise Pen to "play

pretend" and gain courage from an outfit, female viewers are able to imagine that their

school uniform can become a superhero costume, thereby the sailor school uniform

becomes an object of power.



Figure 9. Comparison of Usagi's school uniform to her sailor suit. The image is from *Sailor Moon Crystal*, but the art is based on the manga. Note the similar color scheme, the bow, and the sailor collar. Image by DuchessDream, *SMC Sailor Moon Usagi Tsukino S1-2.Png*, (*Sailor Moon Wiki*, 2021). https://sailormoon.fandom.com/wiki/Usagi_Tsukino_/_Sailor_Moon_(Crystal) .

**Conclusion**

As previously stated, we are currently in the 4th wave of magical girls' series, and

*Sailor Moon* has been accused of being outdated. Since the early 1990s, *Sailor Moon* has

remained a popular manga and anime and is still relevant as a feminist, queer text.

Usagi subverts the stereotype of the shojo by being a superhero who is still a clumsy

teenaged girl; furthermore, she does not allow herself to be defined by societal

expectations for girls. *Sailor Moon*, the series and the character, are not confined by

gender, inhabiting the liminal space between male and female.  Sailor Moon claims the

narrative as the "pretty soldier" who fights for love and justice. The series similarly

blends male and female tropes, specifically science and technology, expanding the definition of what a shojo series is. Even though there is romance in the series, Usagi's romance and boyfriend are not the sources of her strength; her homosocial friendships take prominence, especially in the anime. Finally, the visual representation of the teenaged body and sexuality through the wearing of the sailor suit is not inherently sexist or fetishized due to the female gaze. Girls can celebrate their sexuality and bodies as Sailor Moon does when she decides to change into her sailor uniform. And just as Usagi's ordinariness is what makes her an admirable main character, the ordinariness of using a sailor school uniform as a model for the sailor suit allows female viewers to imagine that their school uniform can become a superhero's suit. Just as Sailor Moon controls the narrative by calling herself "pretty" and a "soldier," girls reading the manga and watching the show can find their strength through a girl just like them to reclaim their own narrative and declare who they are or who they want to be.

## Notes

[1] Saito Tamaki, *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, trans. J. Keith Vincent and Dawn Lawson (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 170-172.

[2] Sharalyn Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, edited by Joshua S. Mostow, Norman Bryson, and Maribeth Graybill, (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 227.
http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvvn1gr.15.

[3] Shojo can refer to a girl, typically in her teens, or it refers to texts that are marketed for girls.

[4] Kathryn Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 1st ed., (Cham: Springer International Publishing), 2020.

[5] Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 6.

[6] Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 6.

[7] Alexis Ada Rangell-Onwuegbuzia, "'Breakable Human Bodies': A Fourth Wave of the Mahō Shōjo" (presentation, Southwest Popular/American Culture Association 43rd Annual Conference, Albuquerque, NM, February 23-16, 2022).

[8] Most of the scholarship about *Sailor Moon* focuses on the lesbian relationship between Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune. Their relationship and Sailor Uranus' gender identity are important, but it was outside of the scope of this paper as I wanted to focus on other aspects of *Sailor Moon* that might have not been written about. For more about Sailor Uranus or Sailor Neptune see Diana Burgos "The Queer Glow up of Hero-Sword Legacies in She-Ra, Korra, and Sailor Moon" in *Open Cultural Studies* and Catherine E. Bailey "Prince Charming by Day, Superheroine by Night? Subversive Sexualities and Gender Fluidity in *Revolutionary Girl Utena* and *Sailor Moon*" in *Colloquy: Text, Theory, Critique*.

[9] Grace En-Yi Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, edited by Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 317. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/10.4324/9781315179582

[10] Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 311.

[11] Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 311-12.

[12] Gunhild Borggreen, "Gender and Visual Culture," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, edited by Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 333. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/10.4324/9781315179582

[13] Anne Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press), 2006.

[14] Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 135.

[15] Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 227.

[16] Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2011), 110.

[17] Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 135.

[18] Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 131.

[19] Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 226.

[20] Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 135.

[21] Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 3,* (New York, NY: Kodansha Comics, 2012), 116.

[22] I am using Kodansha Comics' 2011 translation of *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, where the translation may differ from previous translations of the manga and translations in the anime. Typically, the sentiment is consistent across translations and subtitles, excluding the Canadian DiC Entertainment dubbing of *Sailor Moon*.

23 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, 37-38.

24 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, 49-50.

25 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 27.

26 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 128.

27 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 137.

28 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 216.

29 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 6.

30 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 137.

31 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 142.

32 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 3*, 52-116.

33 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 137.

34 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 3*, 52-116.

35 Tamaki, *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, 170-172.

36 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*, 35.

37 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 28.

38 Borggreen, "Gender and Visual Culture," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 337.

39 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 315.

40 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 219.

41 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 219.

42 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 18.

43 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," 225.

44 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," 225.

45 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 142.

46 Toei Animation, *Bishōjo Senshi, Sailor Moon R*, TV Asahi, 1993.

47 Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian: Sailor Moon 1*.

48 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 314.

49 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 30.

50 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 314.

51 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 315.

52 The relationship between Sailor Uranus and Sailor Neptune was whitewashed into cousins in the DiC anime dubbing of *Sailor Moon* in the 1990s.

53 "Ships" is internet term for "relationships," where fans pair up couples in media that may not be cannon. Fans express ships by placing an "x" in between the names of the two characters who they ship, such as Chibiusa x Sailor Saturn. Often ships are explored in fan art and fan fiction.

54 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 142; Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 225.

55 Toei Animation, *Bishōjo Senshi, Sailor Moon*, TV Asahi, 1992. 2378, 2376

56 Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch, William E. Cain, Laurie A. Finke, John McGowan, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Jeffrey J. Williams, 3rd ed., (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018), 2378, 2376.

57 Susan Bordo, "Unbearable Weight," *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*, edited by Vincent B. Leitch, William E. Cain, Laurie A. Finke, John McGowan, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Jeffrey J. Williams, 3rd ed., (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2018), 2101.

58 Sally McLaren, "Gender, Media, and Misogyny in Japan," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, edited by Jennifer Coates, Lucy Fraser, and Mark Pendleton, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2020), 340. https://doi-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/10.4324/9781315179582

59 Borggreen, "Gender and Visual Culture," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 333.

60 McLaren, "Gender, Media, and Misogyny in Japan," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 340.

61 McLaren, "Gender, Media, and Misogyny in Japan," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 340.

62 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 312.

63 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 312.

64 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 313.

65 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 313.

66 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*; Borggreen, "Gender and Visual Culture," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*; McLaren, "Gender, Media, and Misogyny in Japan," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*; Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture"; Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*.

67 Tamaki, *Beautiful Fighting Girl*, 170-172.

68 Orbaugh, "Busty Battlin' Babes: The Evolution of the Shōjo in 1990s Visual Culture," *Gender and Power in the Japanese Visual Field*, 226.

69 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 314-15.

70 Ting, "Gender, Manga, and Anime," *The Routledge Companion to Gender and Japanese Culture*, 314.

71 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 18.

72 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 2.

73 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 19.

74 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 18.

75 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 18.

76 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 135.

77 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 129.

78 Also called *Cutie Honey*.

79 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 133.

80 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 30.

81 Allison, *Millennial Monsters: Japanese Toys and the Global Imagination*, 134.

82 Hemmann, *Manga Cultures and the Female Gaze*, 30.

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