

Natsu Onoda Power, *God of Comics, Osamu Tezuka and the Creation of Post-World War II Manga*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2009, 202 pages.
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For this book the Japanese author Natsu Onoda Power, a long time fan of Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989), has read some 150,000 pages of Tezuka's manga and she has viewed also his extensive animation work for television and film theatres. These stunning statistics give an idea how vast the creative output of Tezuka and his (manga and anime) studios was. Onoda Power had to make, of course, a selection among the manga or anime she discusses in her book. Though most of her choices are quite evident (his most canonical or reviewed works), she also goes into some of his less known but very interesting works, which may spur the reader to read those works as well. Though she has consulted a very extensive range of Japanese and English literature on Tezuka, she never mentions Go Ito's controversial but fundamental study *Tezuka is Dead* (*Tezuka izu deddo*, 2005).

In less than 200 pages Onoda Power not only relates clearly the artistic career of Tezuka, but she delivers also some crucial biographic information about him - like his depression late 1950's when the new genre of gekiga manga became popular and he had to adapt to this new situation. She contextualizes Tezuka's work also by giving concise but essential background information about the historical development of manga and of the Japanese society. One of her goals is indeed to make clear to what extent Tezuka's innovations in the field of manga were based on or derived from previous comics in Japan or abroad. For instance she explains well why *New Treasure Island* made such an impressive impact at the time of its debut, while it does not look so special to us today. Onoda Power deals furthermore extensively with the intertextual aspects of Tezuka's work: not only his frequent quotations of films, theatre and literature, but also his so-called Star System that uses similarly looking characters in various of his comics.

On the whole Onoda Power is very cautious in uttering statements, she often hides behind expressions as "others have claimed that...", but it remains frequently unclear what her actual point of view is as an expert of Tezuka. Now it looks as if some bold statements – not at least by Tezuka himself - are indeed true, while they are sometimes quite debatable. For instance she writes that Tezuka claimed to be the first cartoonist who came up with "anti-happy endings" and that it was a recurrent theme in his work, but she 'forgets' to tell that historically and in regards to comics worldwide "anti-happy endings" were already used in the 19th century (think for instance of the cruel death of Max and Moritz).

All by all this is a very interesting book that offers a clever introduction to the life and works of Tezuka. It is moreover sufficiently illustrated by the original Japanese versions.

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