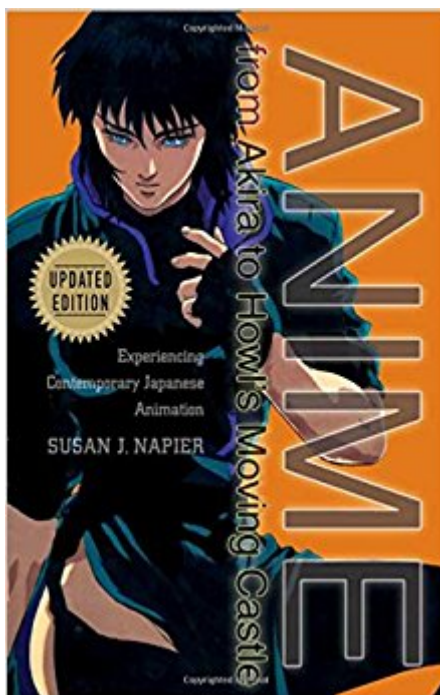


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# Anime From Akira To Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation



## Synopsis

This new edition of the groundbreaking popular book is a must-have for both seasoned and new fans of anime. Japanese animation is more popular than ever following the 2002 Academy Award given to Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*. It confirmed that anime is more than just children's cartoons, often portraying important social and cultural themes. With new chapters on *Spirited Away* and other recent releases, including *Howl's Moving Castle*--Miyazaki's latest hit film, already breaking records in Japan--this edition will be the authoritative source on anime for an exploding market of viewers who want to know more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“...A thoughtful and carefully researched account.”  
The New York Times  
“Napier draws a rather complete picture of Japanese animation as a legitimate art form, and uses anime as a key to the culture that creates it.”  
Entertainment Weekly  
“This worthy addition to the burgeoning literature on Japanese popular culture will stand the test of time.”  
Choice  
“This is a riveting and inspiring book, one that I have thoroughly enjoyed reading and from which I have learned a great deal. As a source of concrete information about Japanese animation it is invaluable.”  
Sharon Kinsella, Cambridge University  
“Informative, well-written, and yet entertaining...both generous and critically insightful.”  
Sharalyn Orbaugh, University of British Columbia

Susan J. Napier is Professor of Japanese Literature and Culture at the University of Texas, Austin.

A great book dealing with more subtle agendas behind Japanese animations and the way it evolved into today's industry. This book is an analytical review in the author's eyes, depicting patterns and forms logical bridges behind certain anime's content and how it possibly could have come to that. Each chapter deals with a different genre of anime such as obsession of young girls, the "world is ending" theme, and giant robots. The chapters are written clearly and in a factual manner. One could assume this book is utilized for an Art or Film college class as textbook. However, if you like anime and care more about it than the "pretty picture" it's worth a read.

had to buy it for class. a hack writer who makes many obvious observations, and stretches for crazy bs the rest of the time. the history parts were good, though. the fact that she reviewed a hentai in here as if it had any sort of literary merit aside from "causing boners" is hilarious to me.

This book is pretty solid. I enjoyed reading it but the author definitely does have a slant in regards to gender that was kind of a turn off. I would have preferred a book that explored a bit more into the male roles in anime instead of just the female perspective. But its is still a rock'n book and worth a read.

Fascinating! Never knew there were so many anime films out there. This book has 'em all, even the really rare ones like Danta no Daibouken!

My review will consist of two parts: a review of the actual content first, followed by a review of the physical product. I chose to buy and read *Anime From Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* out of a desire to learn more and think critically about something I'm very passionate about, which is obviously anime. I, unlike many of the other reviewers, did not have to read this book for a college course. Despite this difference, I too share many of their concerns. Although I am ecstatic that whole critical books are being dedicated to anime, this particular one falls short of what it could and should be. I have not seen every anime discussed within the work and, due to reading it independently and lacking friends seriously interested in anime, have not discussed it with peers, so I have to take the other reviewers' word(s) that it misconstrues many facts to fit an argument. I noticed that this was true with some of the anime I am familiar with, such as *Cowboy Bebop*, and therefore am willing to accept that it is also true for a number of the other anime discussed in the book. That the author

would get many basic facts about the anime examined wrong is unfortunate and brings into question her authority on the subject, however, I do not feel that it was done with an academically-corrosive intent. I believe it is evidence more of a lack of accurate analysis for certain anime and information regarding them than a lack of academic integrity, as suggested by some of the other reviewers. This is, of course, only my feeling regarding that matter and is based solely on intuition, not investigation. In any case, it is disappointing that one of the "definitive" critical texts on anime is plagued by arguments supported by faulty evidence. In addition to incorrect information, I felt that some of the chapters were too garbled and unclear about their topic. After finishing numerous chapters, I was left with a confused feeling of "what was the point of that?", which I believe is due to a lack of a clear, centralizing topic in some of the chapters (although, it may be due to an intellectual failing on my part). While it is understandable and even expected that the anime analyzed in a given chapter would contain differing viewpoints and commentary regarding the chapter's subject (given that the anime were made by different people, and different people have differing beliefs), I felt that her analysis was also contradictory in certain instances, contributing to my occasional confusion. There was a lack of various examinations crystallizing around a central idea in these chapters, which leads to (and is very likely due to) another of my complaints: the discussion tended to focus more on what the anime were saying in regard to various topics rather than how they were saying it. This is more of a personal complaint, as I am sure others will prefer that the majority of conversation be about what the messages are, but I wish that more of the book would have been dedicated to analyzing how anime utilizes its medium to convey the messages, emotions, etc., which can make it so incredibly deep. Of course, what anime are saying and why they are saying it is a crucial part of critically understanding anime, but more discussion on how would have been valued. There is also a huge focus on the sexual in the author's analysis. Some sort of sex-related discussion is found in virtually every examination. While this is to be expected in some anime, and can lead to very interesting insights in other, not necessarily "sexual" anime, many times it seems out of place and too far fetched. I am not sure if it was included to give the book "shock value" [to gain attention/attraction], but it seems detrimental to the book's overall quality in any case. Despite these complaints, the work is not completely bad. Indeed, there are some great and truly interesting sections, which provoke thought and, ultimately, a deeper understanding of the potential power and beauty of anime. The wide range of works discussed in the book has also piqued my interest in new shows, which I probably would not have watched otherwise. Although this is a benefit of reading the book, discovering new anime to experience, of course, does not require one to purchase and read this book. Also, it has introduced me to other critical works on anime,

though this falls into the previously described condition of not being dependent on buying this book. The book is at its best in the introduction and opening chapters and the conclusion, where it makes rather broad statements about anime and its possibilities, which are accurate and well-thought out (not to mention heart-warming for anime fans desiring to see their love given its proper respect and credit). In general, it seems the main ideas contained within the book are not wrong or weak. In fact, they are quite the opposite. However, the book fails to powerfully and clearly connect many of these ideas to real examples from anime, leading to confusing and, perhaps, incorrect analysis. This said, I still enjoyed the conversation of the various anime. Although one (or, at least, I) would think that reading something wrong and flawed about something one is passionate about would be angering (and it definitely can be), the simple fact that the conversation was about anime made the chapters, however confusing, interesting to read. Overall, I recommend this book only to provoke deeper thought about anime and as an interesting discussion. I do not recommend it for one looking for an introduction to the world of anime as it is misleading, but for those already here and desiring to look deeper at anime, this book can serve that purpose in the sense that reading it can open one to new ways of considering the deeper meaning hidden in anime. Then again, other, better works can accomplish this same task. I would give *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* a 2.5/5 if I could, as it does have some redeeming factors, but I am rounding the score down to 2 instead of up to 3 because the flaws ultimately outweigh the positives, and, since this is supposed to be a critical text, the fact that it is interesting and, at parts, enjoyable to read cannot make up for its analytical and academic faults. As for the actual physical product, it is high quality. The pages are strong enough, the text large, and the margins provide ample space for annotations. The cover, though paperback, is sturdy enough. It is a well-made product except for one small fault: the series of pictures contained in the middle of the book, while printed on nice paper, are rather blurry. This is not a huge problem by any means, but many of the pictures (even of more recent anime) look unclear.

This book was used in my anime class. I can't believe how analytical and culturally deep those "cartoons" are. Give it a go.. There isn't much out there on the topic academically.

I ordered this for my anime-based class at university and it's an interesting book beyond the required readings prescribed for my class. I look forward to reading the book from cover to cover after the semester ends and do wish it to be updated sometime soon as its revised edition is now 10 years old.

This book is for a university class that hasn't started yet. However, I've actually read the book and have enjoyed it immensely. I feel as if I can walk into the class and tackle any questions the professor throws my way.

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