Emily Booth, "Entry on: Codename: Sailor V [□□□□□□□□□□□□ (Kōdonēmu wa Sērā Bui)] by Naoko Takeuchi", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1421. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Naoko Takeuchi

Codename: Sailor V [□□□□□□□□□□□□ (Kōdonēmu wa Sērā Bui)]

Japan (1991)

TAGS: Acropolis Adonis Aphrodite Artemis Narcissus Pandora Parthenon Venus





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Codename: Sailor V [□□□□□□□□□□□□ (Kōdonēmu wa Sērā Bui)]
Country of the First Edition	Japan
Country/countries of popularity	Japan, Worldwide
Original Language	Japanese
First Edition Date	1991
First Edition Details	Originally serialised in *RunRun* Magazine: August 3, 1991 – July 3, 1997. First Japanese compilation of 2 volumes: Naoko Takeuchi, *Codename: Sailor V 1–2*, Kodansha Comics, 1992–1997.
ISBN	9781935429777 / 9781935429784 (2014 edition)
Genre	Comics (Graphic works), Shōjo Manga / Girls' Manga*, Urban fiction
Target Audience	Crossover (Teenage Girls, Young Adults)
Author of the Entry	Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Naoko Takeuchi (Author, Illustrator)

Naoko Takeuchi is the creator of numerous successful manga series for teenage girls; most notably the globally-renowned *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon* and its prequel series, *Codename: Sailor V*. As a manga artist, she both authors and illustrates all her works. She has won numerous awards, and *Sailor Moon* is considered the archetype of the "magical girl" character and genre. Nonetheless, Takeuchi has frequently discussed the publisher and editorial interference in the *Sailor Moon* manga, and criticised the 1990s anime adaptation for having "a slight male perspective" due to the mostly-male creator team, compared to her manga which was "written by a girl (me) for girls…" (quoted in MTV). She originally trained to be a licensed pharmacist at Kyoritsu University of Pharmacy and graduated with a degree in chemistry. Takeuchi is also a songwriter under the pen name "Sumire Shirobara", and has written many songs to accompany various *Sailor Moon* adaptations.

Sources:

Sailor Moon official website (accessed: July 26, 2021);

AnimeNewsNetwork (accessed: July 26, 2021);

Alverson, Brigid, *Sailor Moon 101: Pretty, Powerful, and Pure of Heart* available at MTV.com (accessed: July 26, 2021).

Bio prepared by Emily Booth, University of Technology, Sydney, Emily.Booth@uts.edu.au

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Additional information

Translation	English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Polish.

Summary

Codename: Sailor V follows 13-year-old Minako Aino, a happy-go-lucky girl who receives the power to transform into a magical warrior with the codename Sailor V (short for Sailor Venus), the Soldier of Love and Beauty. Transforming not only changes her clothes, but grants her access to supernatural powers to fight enemies. Codename: Sailor V is both the prequel to and inspiration for *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, with the positive reception to the first chapter being the catalyst for the development of Sailor Moon. *Codename: Sailor V* chapters were published sporadically between 1991–1997. The series draws on Greek and Roman mythology and 1990's Japanese popular culture for the series' worldbuilding, and the characters' interests.

On the day Minako is preparing to confess her love for a senior student named Higashi, she is followed by a white cat with a crescent moon on its forehead. Higashi is constantly surrounded by adoring girls, so when he is assigned as Minako's tutor, to help with her low grades, she is thrilled. That night, as Minako wishes to be more beautiful, the white cat enters her room and assures her that she was born under the protection of the goddess of beauty. The cat introduces himself as Artemis, entrusts her with a magical crescent-shaped compact, and shows her a vision of the planet Venus. He tells Minako she was born to fight enemies in the name of Venus. The next day, believing the vision was a dream, she tries to deliver her love letter to Higashi. However, it is revealed that Higashi is really a monster named Narcissus, and that he is enslaving the girls who fall in love with him to help his leader take over Japan. Overhearing a girl scream as she is enslaved, Minako receives an enchanted pen that helps her transform for the first time into Sailor V. The mirror in her compact reveals Higashi's true form as Narcissus, and she uses it to send a laser at him, destroying him. Though Minako is sad, Artemis promises to stay by her side – and Minako quickly finds another popular boy to fall in love with.

The villains initially operate through an idol agency, which promotes singers and related products to Japanese youth. However, the Dark Agency's idols are really monsters, who seek to steal the "energy" of

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civilians to help take over Japan. The idol Pandora uses an exclusive 24-hour television show to brainwash watchers; however, Minako is spared as her television cannot get the new channel. Minako sneaks into the TV studio and defeats her using her crescent moon compact. The idol Petite Pandora, Pandora's younger sister, uses her adorable wink to enslave beautiful people, allowing her to kidnap them. Petite Pandora threatens to kill the enslaved students if Sailor V does not meet her at a certain time and place; and Minako sneaks in by magically disguising herself as a cute idol boy. Minako catches Petite Pandora off-guard and defeats her in the same way she did her older sister. Other idols defeated by Sailor V in a similar fashion include the Dark Guys, Twin Dark, and Dark Princess Shizuka, who used subliminal messaging to brainwash audiences.

After these defeats, the Dark Agency try other methods to take over Japan, such as videogames that brainwash players (Cyber Girl Warrior Lurga) and chocolate that steals girls' life force while promising to help them lose weight (deVleene). A mix-up in flights sees Minako travel to Greece instead of Hawaii, where she admires the Acropolis of Athena, and after she defeats a villain named Hibiscusy (a villain named after a Hibiscus, who also intended to travel to Hawaii), tourists take photos of Sailor V by the Parthenon. Minako also falls in love with an older student named Saitou, who is involved in a youth gang despite having a gentle nature. If Saitou is caught fighting again, he will be unable to graduate high school. Minako discovers the rival gang is led by Vivian of the Dark Gang's Union, a branch of the Dark Agency, and defeats them; and she magically disguises herself as Saitou's former favourite teacher to urge him to finish high school.

A new idol named Ace Saijyo becomes an overnight success, whilst brainwashing female fans, at the same time as Minako encounters a strange masked boy who calls himself Phantom Ace – and who saves the brainwashed women. Sailor V fights and defeats a series of pet-themed villains named Nyan-Nyan (associated with cats), Wan-Wan (associated with dogs), and Chuu-Chuu (associated with mosquitos). To prove her love to a boy named Maiku who hopes to be an athlete but is in need of heart surgery, Minako participates in a brutal marathon – only to learn afterwards that the recovered Maiku is already engaged to another girl. In the same chapter, during her preferred form of stress-relief, singing karaoke, she encounters and defeats Karaoke Warrior Mike Makii. As Phantom Ace grows in popularity, Minako periodically wonders if she should retire from being Sailor V.

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When a casting call to play the leading lady in a film opposite the now-globally popular idol Ace Saijyo opens, Minako enters – and wins. However, things take a suspicious turn when Minako learns her character will be a reincarnation of the Princess of Venus (which she actually is). Minako starts to have dreams of someone begging her to save them. Despite worrying about her secret identity being exposed, Minako starts to fall in love with Ace Saijyo. Minako discovers he is also Phantom Ace, and he declares he loves her; but she realises that the person she is destined to be devoted to is the mystery figure from her dreams. Ace's true identity is revealed to be Danburite, the manager of the Dark Agency; however, he destroys his own servant Lin-Lin to save Minako. She wonders if this means he truly cares for her.

As a building collapses over them, Minako's full memories of her past life return. She remembers the person she was destined to protect was the Moon Princess. Danburite says that he existed in the past too, as the Venus soldier Adonis, who loved her as Princess Venus from afar. However, when she was summoned to defend the Moon Kingdom, he grieved that he could never meet her and see her fall in love with him. Because he could not love her in the past, in this life, he has been reborn as her enemy.

Minako kills Danburite in self-defence. However, as he dies, he predicts her future: that she will never find true love, and be doomed to always fight on. Alone, Minako wonders if she has fully awakened as Sailor Venus. Nonetheless, she commits herself to a life of solitary battles until she finds her allies, and embraces her destiny without regret.

Analysis

Codename: Sailor V draws heavily on Greek and Roman mythology, and Minako is frequently aligned with various goddesses of love and beauty. Her name, Minako Aino, means "Beautiful Child of Love" in Japanese, and her male cat's name is Artemis, a reference to the Greek Goddess of the hunt and moon. Minako herself learns this information from an arcade game she played, in which the goddess Artemis was the main character. Though Minako initially believes she is not beautiful, as she becomes more confident in her powers and her goals, Artemis remarks that she grows to be more beautiful and even begins to resemble the goddess of love herself; at which point Minako is illustrated as Venus, adorned with jewels and dressed in a garment

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similar to a peplos. Throughout the series, Minako's character also changes from happy-go-lucky to more focused and thoughtful, as she embraces her duty as a solitary guardian of peace.

In her past life incarnation as Princess Venus, Minako lived in the Magellan Castle located over Aphrodite Terra on the planet Venus. The castle's name references the Magellan Probe which was sent to Venus in the 1990s, which had been named after the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521). Aphrodite Terra is named after the Greek goddess of love, Aphrodite. Several of Minako's enemies through the Dark Agency are also references to Greek mythology. The monster Narcissus (alias Higashi) attracts the attentions of female students to enslave through his beauty. The mythical Narcissus was enthralled by his own beautiful reflection; ironically, he is the first of the enemies to have his true monstrous form revealed and destroyed by Minako's magical compact mirror. The enemies Pandora and Petite Pandora reference the myth of Pandora's box, which when opened, released all the horrors into the world. Pandora's use of boxy televisions, through which to broadcast her brainwashing powers, allude to this.

The Venus soldier Adonis takes his name from the renowned mortal beauty of whom Aphrodite was particularly fond until his death. In *Codename: Sailor V,* Adonis also has a tragic fate, either going unnoticed by Princess Venus in the past, or doomed to be her enemy when reincarnated as Danburite in the present. As he tells Minako's fortune – that she will never find true love, and will lead a life of battle – he hands her a playing card of the Ace of Hearts. This alludes to his existence as her greatest love who she could never be with, his alternative identities as Ace Saijyo/Phantom Ace, and the cruel games he played with Minako's emotions. Minako's close association with Venus is echoed in her frequent schoolgirl crushes – and occasionally, more serious affections such as her "great loves" of Higashi, Saitou, Maiku, and Ace/Danburite. However, as Danburite predicts, Minako's greatest irony is that she is cursed to never find true romantic love, because her devotion to her duty is greater than that of her girlhood dreams of being in love. Despite Minako's strong alignment with goddesses of love and beauty, *Codename: Sailor V* is ultimately a highly subversive story that reveals that romance, beauty, and popular culture are lesser pursuits in the face of one's destiny.

The references to Greek and Roman mythology throughout the series connect to both the ongoing contemporary interest in such stories

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	among young adult audiences, and broader themes that are typical of Japanese Girls' Manga. In particular, the figure of a self-conscious teenage girl who often longed for a boyfriend that is so commonly depicted in these genres is subverted: Minako grows to become wholly committed to her life's goal, and becomes highly confident in her appearance and dreams without the approval of boys or her peers. In contrast, figures from Classical mythology are depicted as fixated on dating or appearance (such as Adonis, or Narcissus); and they are routinely defeated by the increasingly self-assured Minako. Through these allusions, common teenage feelings and themes in young adult fiction and Girls' manga can be included for readers, but through a lens of female empowerment.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Acropolis Adonis Aphrodite Artemis Narcissus Pandora Parthenon Venus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adventure Adversity Coming of age Fairy tale references Fashion Femininity Friendship Gender, female Girls Good vs evil Heroism Intertextuality Love Magic Magic powers Maturity Morality Pop culture references Romance Transformation
Further Reading	Fujimoto, Yukari, "Sailor Moon! The Treasure Box All Girls Want" in Masami Toku, ed., *International Perspectives on Shojo Manga*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2015, 32–39. Nozomi, Masuda, "Shojo Manga and Its Acceptance: What is the Power of Shojo Manga?" in Masami Toku, ed., *International Perspectives on Shojo Manga*, Routledge, New York, NY: Routledge, 2015, 23–31.
Addenda	Originally serialised in RunRun Magazine: August 3, 1991 – July 3, 1997.

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First Japanese compilation of 2 volumes: Naoko Takeuchi, Codename: Sailor V 1–2, Kodansha Comics, 1992–1997.

Second Japanese compilation of 2 volumes: Naoko Takeuchi, Codename: Sailor V 1–2, Kodansha Comics, 2003–2004.

Third Japanese compilation of 2 volumes: Naoko Takeuchi, Codename: Sailor V 1–2, Kodansha Comics, 2014.

Editions used for entry:

Sailor Moon Volume 1: Naoko Takeuchi, *Codename: Sailor V Volume 1*, Kodansha Comics, 2014, 280 pp.

Sailor Moon Volume 2: Naoko Takeuchi, *Codename: Sailor V Volume 2*, Kodansha Comics, 2014, 296 pp.

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