

ShÅ•jo Manga morals

Description



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ShÅ•jo Manga is a genre of Japanese graphic novel, animation and merchandising thatâ??s marketed for a young female audience. Search images for â??Princess Tutuâ?• for some saccharine sweetness laced with cute gooeyness. You could be forgiven for thinking itâ??s kidsâ?? stuff. But whatever manga is, itâ??s not innocent. We are not 14 anymore. ***Transformation*** features as a strong theme in manga, according to scholar June Madeley. Already thereâ??s the graphic transformation of the young girl into an idealised Western fashion magazine stereotype (those astonished round eyes and long legs), and the thin â??feminisedâ?• male characters (if they are â??good guysâ?•). Characters sometimes switch genders: â??In manga there is a long history of highly fluid and often ambivalent depictions of gender, sexuality, and gender relationsâ?• (p.800). The child in the story may also have their wish fulfilled to be transformed instantly into a mature teenager or woman, even temporarily. Characters such as Madoka Magica are highly â??sexualised.â?•

That *other* childhood

Manga represents a reciprocal play in ***otherness***. There are European manga conventions. I stumbled across one in Copenhagen of all places last year. Western teenagers were dressed in costumes to look like characters from manga comics that in turn mimicked or parodied European dress, all under the purview of a vigorous merchandising regime. Of course manga shops can be found in any European city.



Dressing up and transformation are part of â??growing up,â?• which is a slightly more paternalistic way of referencing what Freud identified as the â??rite of passage.â?• Whatever the controversies surrounding his theories of human development, one of Freudâ??s great contributions was to take the cuteness out of childhood, and render it ***other****:* the Oedipal condition, the boy desiring the love of his mother and wanting to kill his father, the girl offering to her parents excrement as her first gift, later to be transformed into desire for a baby. These are themes of repression easily extracted from the Grimm brothers stories, *Alice in Wonderland*, Harry Potter, or Madoka Magica. If childhood is about guilt, trauma and cover-up then nothing is indeed innocent.

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Notes

- The first image on this page is modelled and animated in Blender by Yanjie He, student in the MSc in Design and Digital Media.
- See more on Princess Tutu, Madoka Magica and the YouTube clip of Hatsune Miku in concert
- The Copenhagen convention was J-Popcon 2011 described as: â??The oldest and largest convention in Denmark with focus on anime, manga, cosplay and other aspects of the Japanese pop culture. On top of all this is the Danish qualification round for the World Cosplay Summit in Nagoya, Japan and one of the Danish qualification rounds for EuroCos in London, England.â?• Search â??cosplayâ?• on Google images.
- Some quotes on childhood from John Locke: â??most childrenâ??s constitutions are either spoiled, or at least harmed, by cockering and tendernessâ?• (4); â??Curiosity should be as carefully cherished in children, as other appetites suppressedâ?• (108).
- Also see Otaku architecture and Kim Jong Il Orz.



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1. anime
2. childhood
3. comics
4. ethics
5. Madoka Magica
6. manga
7. sexualisation
8. ShÅ•jo

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