



Girls' "Metamorphosis"

: Anime and Gender in Japan

Kirihara, Kenshin

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- 1] Hello Everyone. I am KIRIHARA Kenshin, Professor in the Department of Japanese Culture. I specialize in the cultural and intellectual history of modern and contemporary Japan.


Today's issues

▶ Main Theme

- ▶ Changes in Gender Representation in Japanese Society
- ▶ Girls' Metamorphosis in Manga and Anime
- ▶ Metamorphosis as “Ideal Images”
 - ▶ How have these changed over time?

▶ 4

- 4] Today, we will think about metamorphosis of girls in Japanese manga and anime and what this can tell us about changes in gender representation in Japanese society. “Henshin” or “Metamorphosis” means becoming someone different from who they are now. In other words, through metamorphosis, a person can become the self they hope to be. In that sense, the form a character takes after metamorphosis can be seen as an ideal image for girls of that time. Today, we will explore how these ideal images have changed over time.



Japan in the 1950s

20

20] We will begin with the 1950s. What was the ideal image of Japanese girls at that time?

Girls fought
actively!

▶ 21

21] Girls fought actively—just like this.



リボンの騎士 1967

あたしの見_(み)る夢_(ゆめ)は 秘密_(ひみつ)
なの だれにも言_(い)わない 秘密
(ひみつ)なの / 赤(あか)いマント ヒラヒラ
馬_(うま)をとばす王女_(おうじょ) それがあ
たし / リボンの騎士_(きし)は ほんとは
ほんとは あたしなのさあ

▶ 23

「リボンの騎士」 1967

My dream is a secret that I do not talk about.

A princess riding a horse, wearing a fluttering red cape.

The Ribbon Knight is me in truth!

▶ 24

- 24] My dream is a secret that I do not talk about. A princess riding a horse, wearing a fluttering red cape. The Ribbon Knight is me in truth!

Ribbon no Kishi or Princess Knight



- ▶ Author : Tezuka, Osamu 1928-1989
 - ▶ “Patron Saint of Japanese Manga”
- ▶ Serial publication
 - ▶ 1953-1956
 - Cf. *Cinderella*. 1950
- ▶ Anime adaptation
 - ▶ 1967-1968



▶ 25

- 25] This is *Ribbon no Kishi*, or *Princess Knight*, written by Tezuka Osamu. He is widely known as “Manga no Kamisama,” the “Patron Saint of Japanese Manga,” for pioneering the modern style of story-driven manga. The anime you have just watched was released in 1967, but the original manga began in 1953, three years after the release of **Cinderella**.



- 26] Incidentally, *Ribbon no Kishi* will be renamed *The Ribbon Hero* and released on Netflix this summer. If you have a Netflix subscription, please watch it.

Princess Knight 1953

▶ Princess Sapphire

- ▶ Born with both a female and a male soul
- ▶ Metamorphoses into a prince to fight evil

▶ Reflects girls' desire

- ▶ To act like a boy
 - ▶ Transcendence of gender boundaries
-

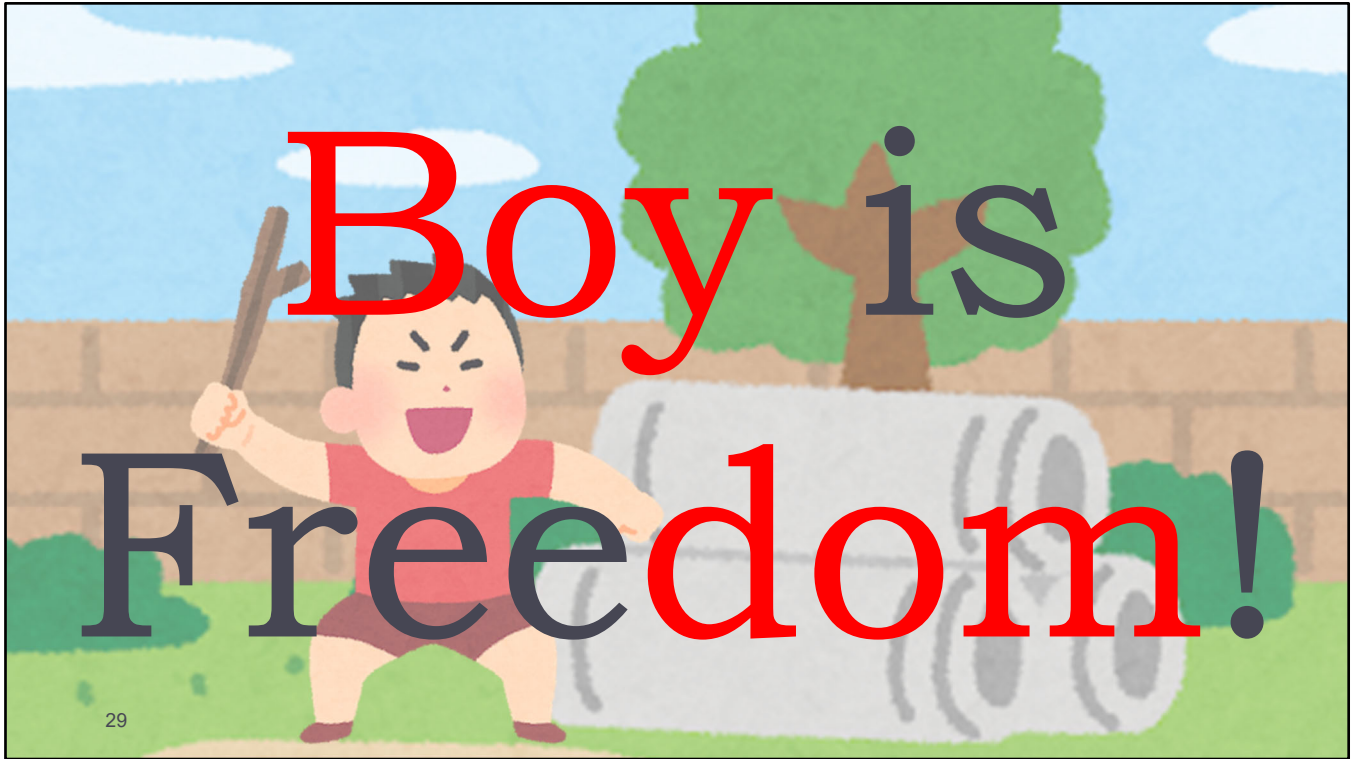
▶ 27



- 27] This is Princess Sapphire. She is a girl, but she was born with both a female and a male soul due to an angel's mischief. Therefore, she removes her dress and metamorphoses into a prince and a knight to fight evil when necessary. This can be understood as a girl's desire to act like a boy, transcending gender boundaries.



28 】 Why did girls want to be like a boys?



- 29] Because Boy is freedom. Boys are often given a pass even if they are a little rowdy. But it is different for girls. They are constantly told to act more like girls and that girls should not behave in such ways. For those girls,

Male attire
= Freedom

▶ 30

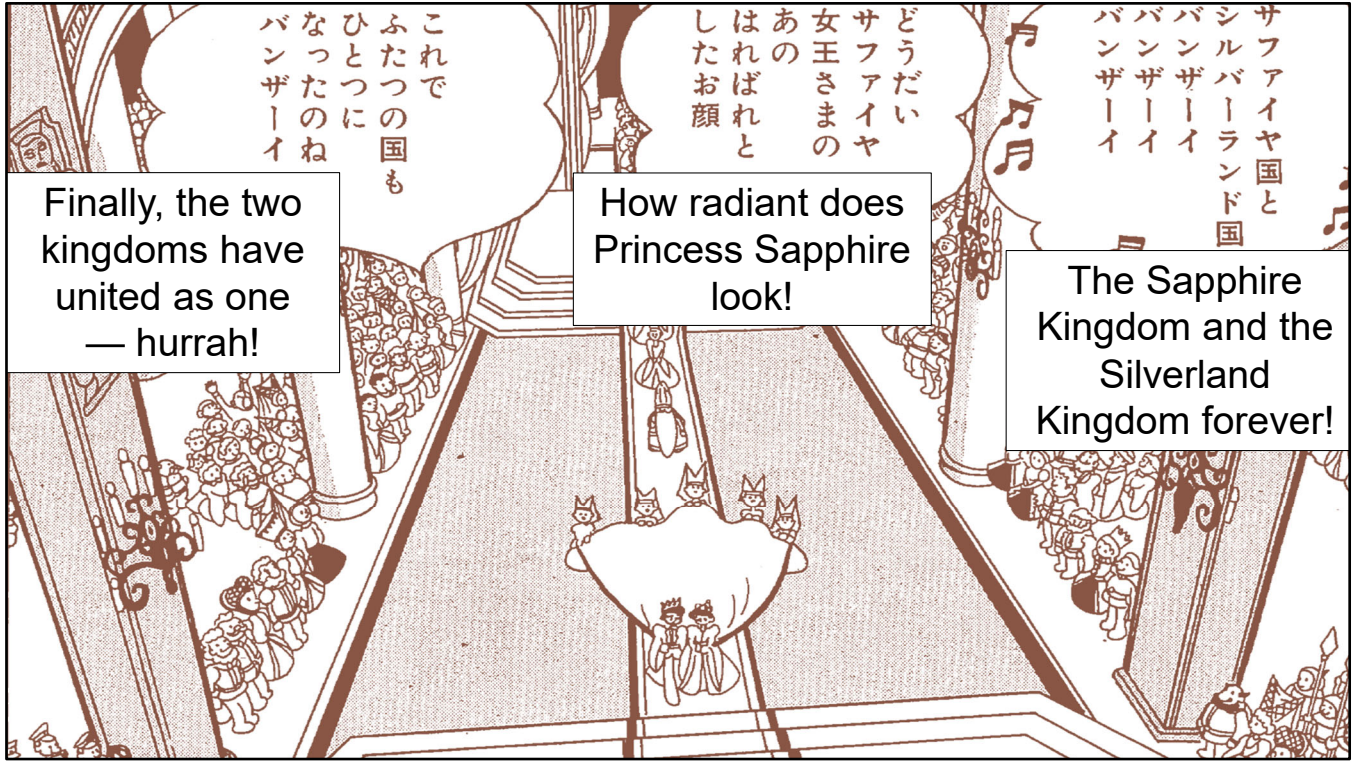


- 30] Sapphire, who dressed as a man, became a symbol of freedom. That is why she was so popular among Japanese girls.

However

▶ 31

31] However, in the end, this is how **Princess Knight** concludes.



- 32] In the end, Sapphire marries the prince of a neighboring country, and the story concludes with a happy ending.


In the 1950s, Tezuk's Conclusion

- ▶ Woman's happiness = Marriage
- ▶ 良妻賢母 *Ryōsai kenbo*
- ▶ “Good Wife, Wise Mother”



33

- 33] In the 1950s, Tezuka's conclusion seems to have been that marriage is a woman's happiness. This was the ideal image of women at that time. It is called “ryōsai kenbo” in Japanese, or the ideal of the “Good Wife and Wise Mother,” devoted to the home. Please remember this term: “Good Wife, Wise Mother.” We will encounter it many times today.



Japan in the 1960s

34

34] This is what the 1960s were like.



ひみつのアッコちゃん 1969

1. そいつの前(まえ)では女(おんな)の子(こ)／つーんとおすまし
それはなに／それは鏡(かがみ) 鏡(かがみ)の中(なか)から ツン
ツンツン／シンデレラ姫(ひめ)が あらわれた ツンツンツン
／それはだあれ それはひみつ／ひみつひみつ ひみつの
アッコちゃん
2. 朝(あさ)から晩(ばん)までまねばかり／ひとまねじょうず それ
はなに／それは鏡(かがみ) 鏡(かがみ)の中(なか)から エッへ
へ／いたずらぼうずがとびだした エッへへ／それはだあれ
それはひみつ／ひみつひみつ ひみつのアッコちゃん

▶ 36

The Secret of Akko-chan 1969

1. In front of that Guy, a little girl / acts all prim and proper. What is that? / It's a mirror. From inside the mirror / Tsun-tsun-tsun / Princess Cinderella appeared. Tsun-tsun-tsun / Who is that? It's a secret. Secret, secret. The Secret of Akko-chan!
2. From morning till night, nothing but imitations / She's so good at imitating / What is that? / It's a mirror / From inside the mirror / He-he-he / A mischievous little boy jumped out / He-he-he / Who is that? / It's a secret. Secret, secret. The Secret of Akko-chan!

- 37] In front of that Guy, a little girl / acts all prim and proper. What is that? / It's a mirror. From inside the mirror / Tsun-tsun-tsun / Princess Cinderella appeared. Tsun-tsun-tsun / Who is that? It's a secret. Secret, secret. The Secret of Akko-chan!
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The Secret of Akko-chan 1969



▶ *Himitsu no Akko-chan*

▶ Author : Akatsuka, Fujio 1935-2008

▶ “King of Gag Manga”

▶ Serial publication

▶ 1962-1965

▶ Anime adaptation

▶ 1969-1970



- 38 】 This is *Himitsu no Akko-chan* or *The Secret of Akko-chan*, written by Akatsuka Fujio, who is known as a pioneer of comedy manga and is often called the “King of Gag Manga.”

The Secret of Akko-chan 1969

- ▶ **Magical Compact**
- ▶ Metamorphoses into anyone she wants to be
- ▶ **Reflects girls' wishes**
- ▶ Desire to become someone other than themselves



- 40] One day, Akko-chan received a magical compact. By casting a spell in front of its mirror, she could metamorphose into anyone she wanted to become. This reflects girls' wishes, particularly their desire to become someone other than themselves.

The Secret of Akko-chan 1969

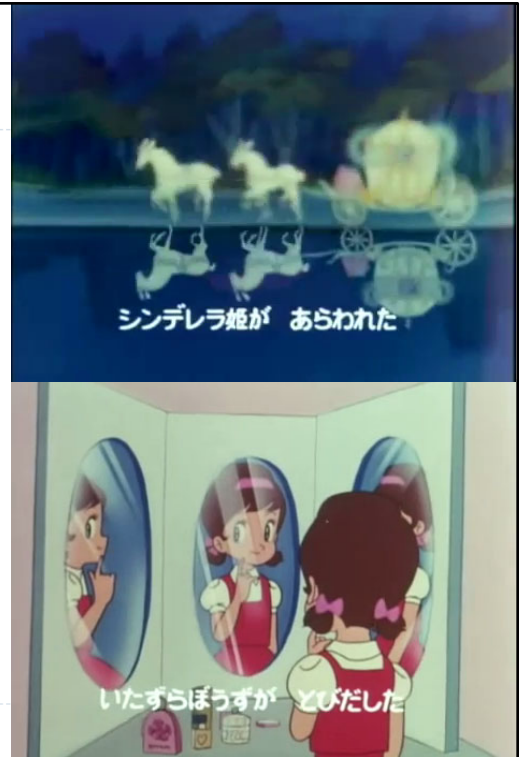
1. In front of that Guy, a little girl / acts all prim and proper. What is that? / It's a mirror. From inside the mirror / Tsun-tsun-tsun / **Princess Cinderella appeared.** Tsun-tsun-tsun / Who is that? It's a secret. Secret, secret. The Secret of Akko-chan!
2. From morning till night, nothing but imitations / She's so good at imitating / What is that? / It's a mirror / From inside the mirror / He-he-he / **A mischievous little boy** jumped out / He-he-he / Who is that? / It's a secret. Secret, secret. The Secret of Akko-chan!

41] According to this opening theme, we can see what she wanted to become. First, "Princess Cinderella," and second, "a mischievous little boy."

The Limitations of Akko-chan's Magic

- ▶ Cinderella = **Adult** Woman
- ▶ Mischievous Boy = **Free** Male
→ Ideals Beyond Girls' Reach
- ▶ Akko-chan's Metamorphosis = Escapist Desire

▶ 42




- 42 】 Here, we can see the limits of Akko-chan's magic. Cinderella is a grown woman, while the mischievous boy is a free male. For Akko-chan and the girl viewers, these were ideals beyond their reach. In this sense, Akko-chan's metamorphosis had a distinctly escapist aspect.
- In the 1960s, when girls were expected to be well-behaved, they dreamed of becoming either an adult woman or a boy through this anime.

Girls Dreamed of Freedom

▶ 43

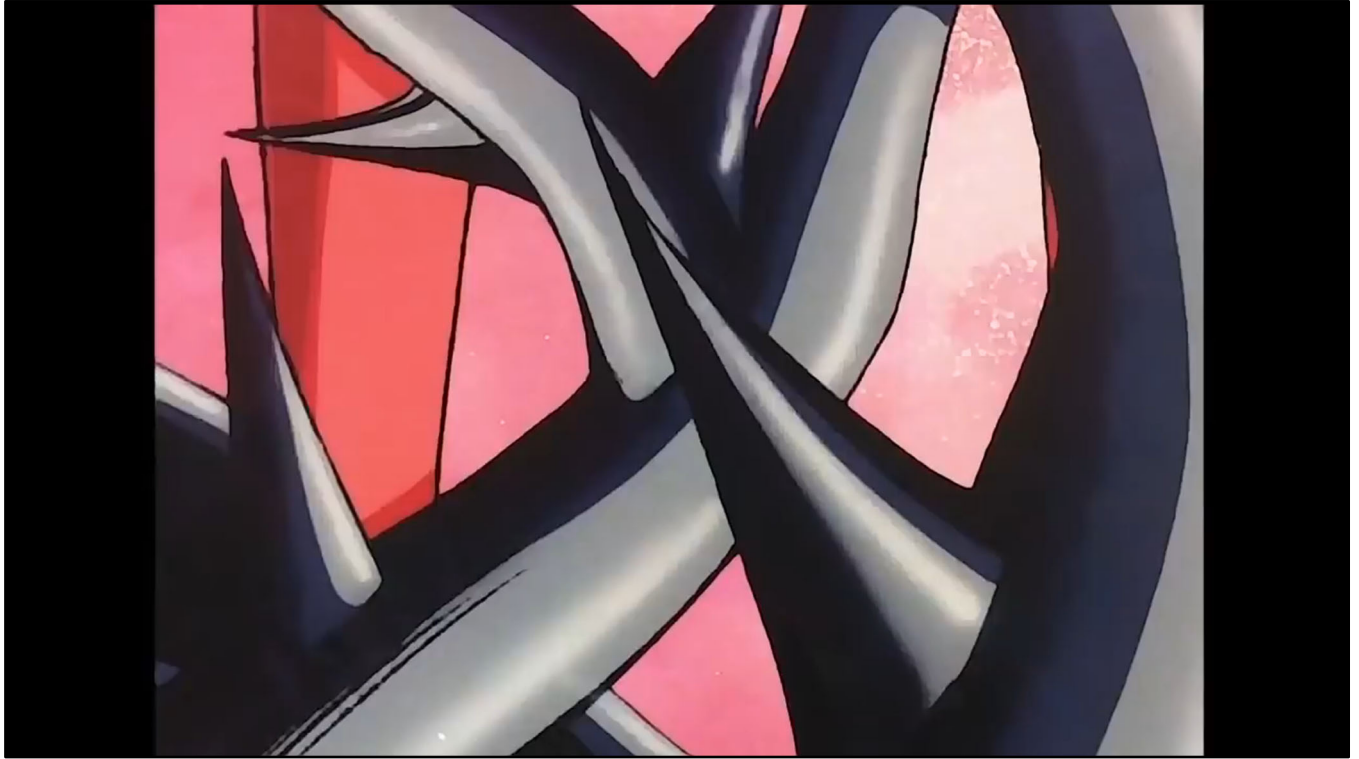
43] That is to say, girls dreamed of freedom.



Japan in the 1970s

44

44 】 However, by the 1970s, girls were no longer content to simply live in a dream world.



「薔薇(ばら)は美(うつく)しく散(ち)る」 1979

草(くさ)むらに名(な)も知(し)れず／咲(さ)いてい
る花(はな)ならば／ただ風(かぜ)を受(う)けなが
ら／そよいでいけばいいけれど／私(わたし)はバ
ラのさだめに生(う)まれた／華(はな)やかに激(は
げ)しく生(い)きると生(う)まれた／バラはバラは
気高(けだか)く咲(さ)いて／バラはバラは美(うつく)
しく散(ち)る

▶ 46

A Rose, Falls With Beauty 1979

If I were just a nameless flower / blooming in
the grass,

I could simply sway in the breeze, and that
would be enough.

But I was born to be a rose, born to live a life
of splendor and passion.

A rose, a rose, blooms with dignity; a rose, a
rose, falls with beauty.

- 47] If I were just a nameless flower / blooming in the grass,
I could simply sway in the breeze, and that would be enough.
But I was born to be a rose, born to live a life of splendor and passion.
A rose, a rose, blooms with dignity; a rose, a rose, falls with beauty.

The Rose of Versailles 1972



▶ 48

- ▶ *Versaille no Bara*
- ▶ Author : Ikeda, Riyoko 1947-
 - ▶ One of the first generation of female manga artists
- ▶ Serial publication
 - ▶ 1972-1973
- ▶ Anime adaptation
 - ▶ 1979-1980



48 】 This is *Versailles no Bara* or *The Rose of Versailles*, written by Ikeda Riyoko, one of the first generation of female manga artists.



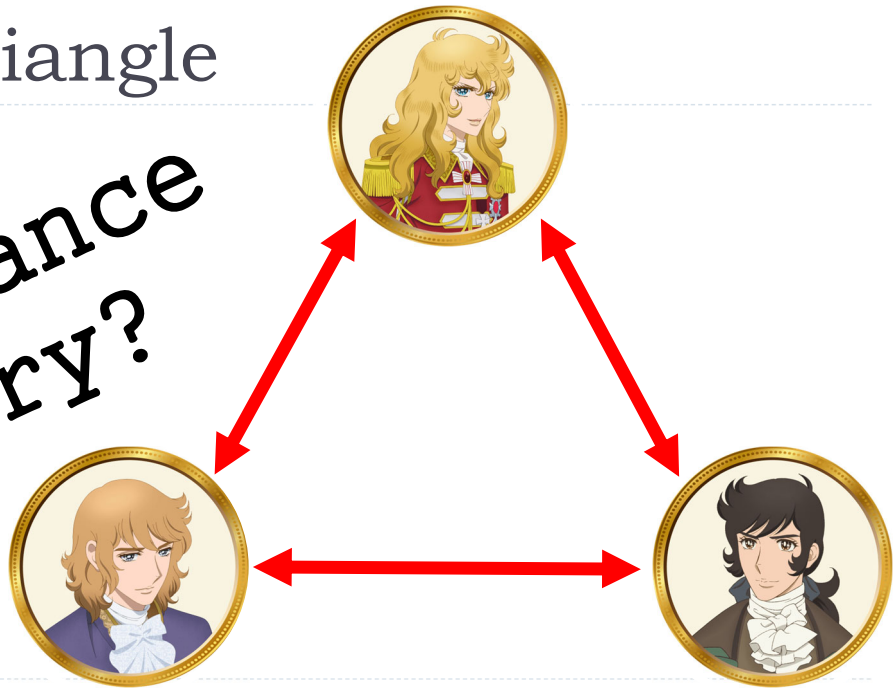
The Rose of Versailles

- ▶ Around the Time of the French Revolution
- ▶ Oscar = woman
 - ▶ dressed in a men's military uniform
 - ▶ Her father, a general, desired a son
 - ▶ Born a daughter, but raised as a boy
 - ▶ Served at the Palace of Versailles
 - ▶ Involved in a love triangle

49 】 The story is set around the time of the French Revolution. The main character is a woman, but she was given a male name, Oscar, and raised as a boy. Her father was a general who had hoped for a son to succeed him. However, since he had only daughters, he raised Oscar as a boy with the intention of making her a military officer. As a result, she wore a men's military uniform and served as an officer at the Palace of Versailles, attending figures such as Marie Antoinette. She was also involved in a love triangle with the two men shown in this image.

A Love triangle

A romance
story?



▶ 50

- 50] Yes, a love triangle. At first glance, you might think this is simply a romance story. However, that is not the main point. This becomes clear in the final moments of Oscar.



Oscar's Final Moments

- ▶ **Joined the Revolutionary Army**
 - ▶ To fight against the royal army
- ▶ **"Vive la France!"**
 - ▶ Died as a soldier for freedom
 - ▶ Rejection of love as a woman's happiness
 - ▶ Symbol of women's participation in society
- ▶ **The 1970s: the age of women's liberation**
 - ▶ 1972: First Mass Meeting for Women's Lib in Japan
 - ▶ 1975: International Women's Year

- 51 **】** Oscar joined the revolutionary army and fought against the royal army to which she had once belonged. During the Battle of the Bastille, she was shot and killed while crying out, "Vive la France!"
- She rejected "a woman's happiness," as represented by Sapphire. Instead of choosing love with her sweetheart, she chose a mission for society. Her male attire was not a dreamy metamorphosis like Akko-chan's, but rather a literal combat uniform that allowed her to fight in society on an equal footing with men. The 1970s was the age of Women's liberation movement. For example, in 1972, the first mass meeting for women's lib in Japan was held. In this context, Oscar, who fought in male attire, became a symbol of women's participation in society.

Male Attire as a Symbol of Women's Liberation



▶ 52

52 】 Exactly, male attire became a symbol of women's liberation!

The 1970s: Women's Situation

- ▶ Permitted to participate in society
 - ▶ Forced to choose between two alternatives : Love or Society (= Home or Work)
- ▶ Required to behave like men
 - ▶ cf. Oscar's male attire
 - ▶ Forced into isolated struggle
 - ▶ Because of little support from other women

53

- 53] The 1970s was a time when women were permitted to participate in society. However, on the other hand, this also meant that girls were forced to face a difficult choice between two alternatives: love or participation in society.

If they chose love, they had to abandon social activity and become housewives, fulfilling the role of the “Good Wife, Wise Mother.” On the other hand, if they chose to participate in society, they had to give up love with their own sweethearts.

Of course, it can be said that their position was better than that of girls in earlier periods, since they were given the right to choose between these two options. However, this was still a harsh reality.


When women sought to participate in society, they often had to behave like men, as Oscar did in a male attire. This meant that women had to fight alone in a male-dominated society. They could not expect support from other women, since they had chosen to act in a masculine way.

Splendid

Isolation

▶ 54

- 54] This can be described as a form of “splendid isolation,” but it was also a very harsh and lonely path. So, did this form of isolation change in the 1980s?



Japan in the 1980s

55

55 】 In the 1980s, the ideal form of metamorphosis for Japanese girls was as follows:



“Love Love Minky Momo”1982

{Love Love ミンキーモモ 願(ねが)いきいて}×2
魔法(まほう)のプリンセス / キラキラ光(ひか)る何
(なに)かが手招(てまね)ききとしてるわ
時(とき)よまわれ 夢(ゆめ)の冒険(ぼうけん) どんな
私(わたし)になれるのかしら
[大人(おとな)になったら 何(なに)になる]×2
Dreaming 夢(ゆめ)がきつと叶(かな)うわ{*}

“Love Love Minky Momo” 1982

{Love, love, Minky Momo, make my wish come true!} (×2) Magical Princess—something sparkling and shining is waving at me, surely waiting for me.

Time, turn! An adventure in a dream—

I wonder what kind of person I will become

[When I grow up, what will I be?](×2) Dreaming
—my dreams will surely come true. {*}

- 58] Love, love, Minky Momo, make my wish come true!
Love, love, Minky Momo, make my wish come true!
Magical Princess—something sparkling and shining is waving at me, surely waiting for me.
Time, turn! An adventure in a dream—
I wonder what kind of person I will become
When I grow up, what will I be?
When I grow up, what will I be?
Dreaming —my dreams will surely come true.
Love, love, Minky Momo, make my wish come true!

Magical Princess Minky Momo



- ▶ Anime Studio: Ashi Productions
- ▶ Anime adaptation: 1982–1983
- ▶ Princess Momo
 - ▶ From the Magic Kingdom
 - ▶ Solved problems through magical metamorphosis

59] This is an opening theme of *Magical Princess Minky Momo*. She is a Princess Momo from the Magic Kingdom, and she solved problems through magical metamorphosis. When you hear the phrase “magical metamorphosis,” you probably think of Akko-chan. However, that is not the case.

What did Momo
metamorphose
into?

▶ 60

60] What did Momo metamorphose into?

“Love Love Minky Momo” 1982

{Love, love, Minky Momo, make my wish come true!} (×2) Magical Princess—something sparkling and shining is waving at me, surely waiting for me.

Time, turn! An adventure in a dream—

I wonder what kind of person I will become

[When I grow up, what will I be?](×2) Dreaming
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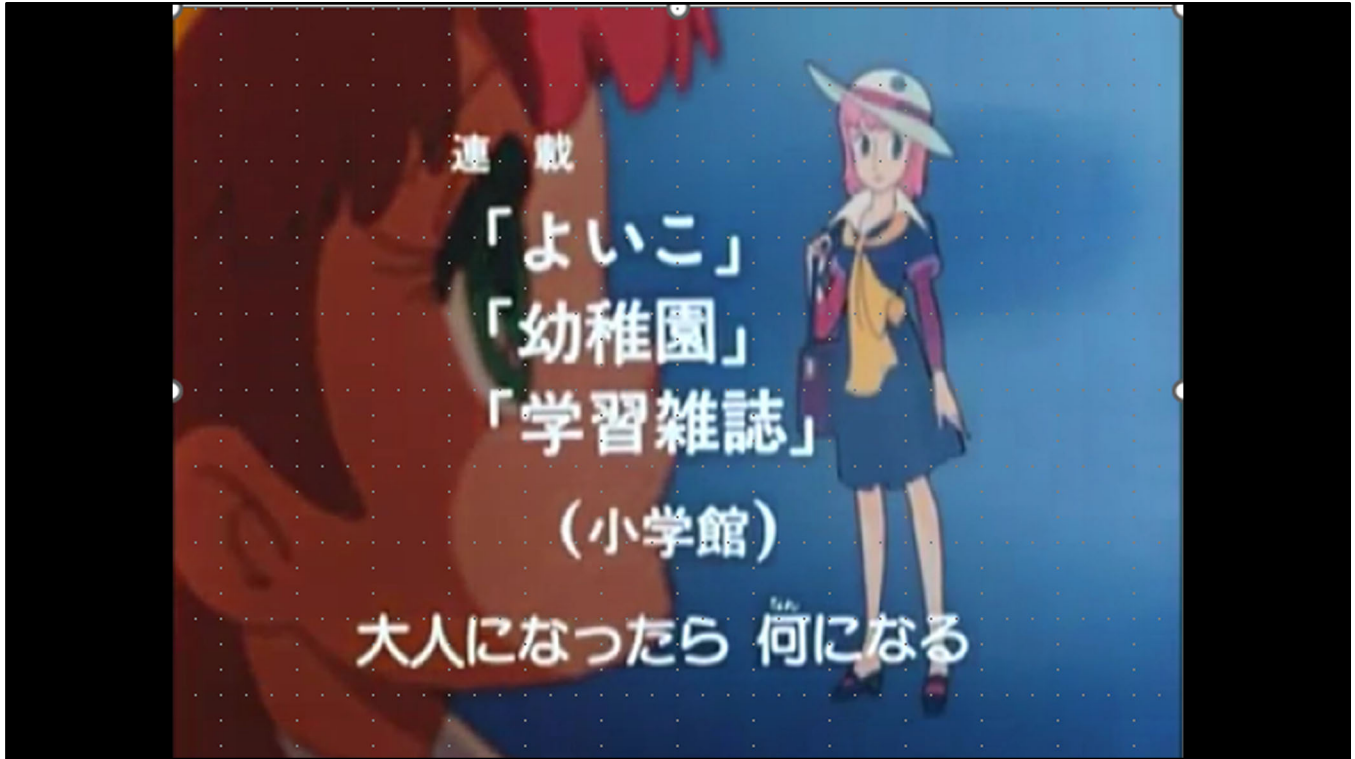
- 61] Please read the lyrics of the opening theme again. We can find that the phrase “When I grow up, what will I be?” is repeated in it.



- 62 】 Like this. Otona ni nattara nan'ni naru (when I grow up, what will I be?) However, this “grow up” meant not simply being adult. Unlike Akko-chan, Momo did not dream of becoming Princess Cinderella. Of course, Momo is already a princess, but that is not the important point. She metamorphoses not into a temporary ideal figure, but into a more concrete and pragmatic one.



63 】 For example, She metamorphoses into a nurse.



64 】 At other times, she metamorphoses into a cabin attendant.

~~Dreamlike
Figures
(e.g., Cinderella)~~

- 65] Momo does not metamorphose into dreamlike figures such as Cinderella, but into working women.

When I grow up, what will I be?

- ▶ **Metamorphosis into a Professional**
 - ▶ Simply “a Working Woman” ... △
 - ▶ “Career Woman” ... ◎
 - ▶ Affirmation of Femininity
- = No Need for Male Attire

▶ 66

- 66] However, she does not simply become “a working woman”; rather, she becomes a professional who works actively in society and solves various problems. In this sense, we can see the influence of the so-called “career woman” in Momo’s story. Furthermore, Momo affirms femininity; therefore, she no longer needs to adopt male attire like Oscar.

Changes in Society in the 1980s

- ▶ **Higher education enrollment rate**
 - ▶ Nearly equal for Men and Women
 - ▶ In the high 30s (cf. over 50% today)
- ▶ **Key Developments:**
 - ▶ CEDAW entered into force in 1981
 - ▶ Equal Employment Opportunity Law (1985)

▶ 68

- 68] The 1980s in Japan were a time when significant progress was made toward gender equality. Enrollment rates in higher education became nearly equal for men and women, reaching the high 30% range. CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women) entered into force in 1981. In 1985, the Equal Employment Opportunity Law was enacted by the Japanese Diet.

An independent yet isolated woman

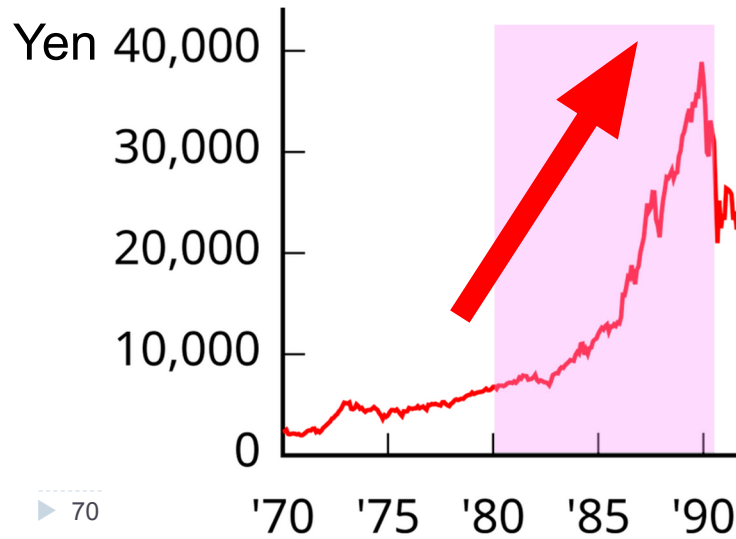
- ▶ **Gender Equality in Real Society**
 - ▶ Equality only within the legal framework
- ▶ **“Career Woman”**
 - ▶ Working like a man
 - ▶ Greater ability and effort than the average man
- ▶ **“An Independent Woman”**
 - ▶ Engaged in a severe and isolated struggle

▶ 69


- 69] Of course, this equality existed only within the legal framework; in reality, gender discrimination still persisted. If a woman wished to succeed as a “career woman,” she had to behave as someone capable of working like a man. However, doing so also required her to demonstrate greater ability and effort than the average man. While she was certainly an independent woman, she was also engaged in a severe and often isolated struggle.

“Bubble Economy”

The Nikkei Stock Average



- 70] However, many women were able to overcome such difficulties. At the time, Japan was experiencing an economic boom—the so-called “bubble economy”—and there was a social climate that enabled women to thrive.



Japan in the 1990s

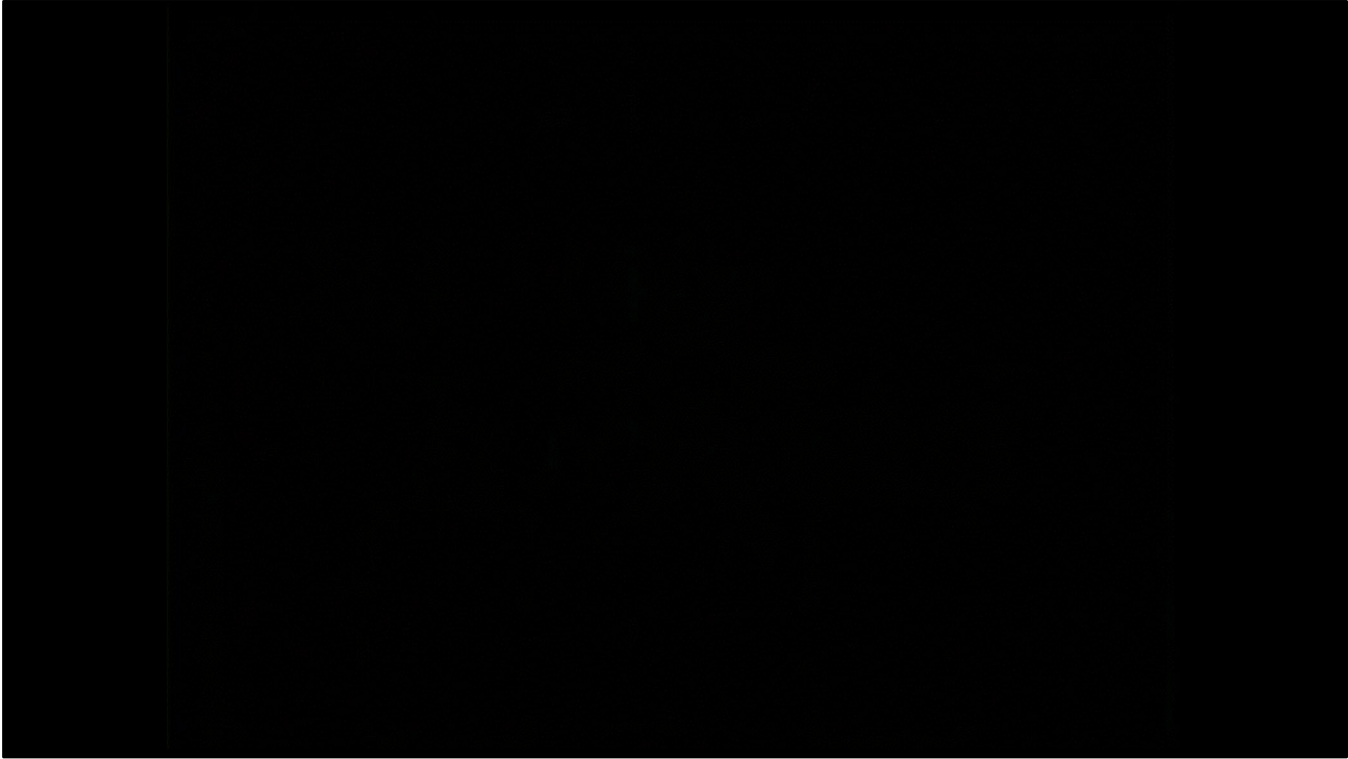
71

71 】 However, in the 1990s, Japanese society changed drastically.

The Lost Decades

▶ 72

- 72] It marked the end of the “bubble economy” and the beginning of the so-called “Lost Decades.” During such difficult times, the ideal form of girls’ metamorphosis changed as follows:



73] 62.

「ムーンライト伝説」 1992

ゴメンね 素直(すなお) じゃなくて 夢(ゆめ) の中(なか) なら
云(い) える 思考回路(しこうかい) はショート寸前(すんぜん)
今(いま) すぐ会(あ) いたいよ 泣(な) きたくなるような
moonlight 電話(でんわ) も出来(でき) ない midnight だって
純情(じゅんじょう) どうしよう ハートは 万華鏡(まんげきょう)
月(つき) の光(ひかり) に 導(みちび) かれ 何度(なんど) も 巡(めぐ)
り会(あ) う 星座(せいざ) の瞬(まばた) き数(かず) え 占(うらな) う
恋(こい) の行方(ゆくえ) 同(おな) じ地球(ちきゅう) に生(う) まれた
の ミラクル・ロマンス 信(しん) じているの ミラクル・ロマンス

▶ 74

“Moonlight Legend” 1992

I'm sorry for not being honest / I could say it if I were in a dream / My mind is on the verge of short-circuiting / I want to see you right now / Moonlight that makes me want to cry / Midnight when I can't even call / Because I'm so innocent, what should I do? / My heart is a kaleidoscope / Guided by the moonlight / We meet again and again / Counting the twinkling stars, I predict the future of our love / We were born on the same Earth—a miracle romance / I believe in it—a miracle romance

- 75 】 I'm sorry for not being honest / I could say it if I were in a dream / My mind is on the verge of short-circuiting / I want to see you right now / Moonlight that makes me want to cry / Midnight when I can't even call / Because I'm so innocent, what should I do? / My heart is a kaleidoscope / Guided by the moonlight / We meet again and again / Counting the twinkling stars, I predict the future of our love / We were born on the same Earth—a miracle romance / I believe in it—a miracle romance

Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon 1992



- ▶ Serial publication
 - ▶ 1992-1997
- ▶ Anime adaptation
 - ▶ 1992-1997
- ▶ Recent Adaptations
 - ▶ *Sailor Moon Crystal* (TV, 2014)
 - ▶ *Sailor Moon Cosmos* (Film, 2023)

76 **】** This is *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*, which was serialized in a magazine from 1992 to 1997 and adapted into a TV anime during the same period. In recent years, it has been remade and was further adapted into a film in 2023.

Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon 1992



- ▶ **Their Metamorphosis**
 - ▶ Not Becoming Adults or Men (Akko-chan, Momo, Sapphire, Oscar)
- ▶ **A Groundbreaking shift**
 - ▶ Fighting in Cute Sailor Uniforms
 - ▶ Remaining Girls
 - ▶ No Need for Male Attire

77] Even after metamorphosis, they do not undergo a drastic change in appearance. They do not become adults or boys; the girls remain girls. Moreover, the outfits they wear are attractive costumes for girls. Of course, sailor uniforms were originally worn by naval soldiers and could be considered male attire. In Japan, however, they have historically been regarded as school uniforms for girls. In the past, female warriors such as Sapphire and Oscar typically dressed in male attire. Unlike earlier girl heroes, Sailor Moon allows girls to gain power without abandoning their femininity. In contrast, these girls wear school uniforms and fight together as members of a superhero team. This is what made *Sailor Moon* so groundbreaking.

The 1990s: Changing Ideals of Girls

- ▶ A Vague Sense of Anxiety about the Future
 - ▶ 1980s “When I grow up, what will I be?”
↓
 - ▶ 1990s “**Even if** I grow up, what will I be?”
- ▶ Becoming an Adult or Behaving Like Men
→ No Longer an Appealing Goal

▶ 78

- 78] In the 1990s, following the end of the bubble economy, young girls began to feel a vague sense of anxiety about the future. In the 1980s, Momo sang, “When I grow up, what will I be?” This song presented a bright and hopeful vision of the future awaiting them in adulthood. However, in the 1990s, the future became uncertain. It shifted to something closer to “Even if I grow up, what will I be?” This was a difficult time for both men and women, and for girls, becoming an adult was no longer an appealing goal. Instead, they began to embrace their girlhood, rejecting both the expectation to behave like men and the desire to grow up. In this sense, we can observe a tendency toward escapism.

A New Form of “Metamorphosis”

▶ Sailor Moon

- ▶ Remaining Fourteen Years Old
- ▶ Fighting Evil in a School Uniform
- ▶ Fighting as Part of a Team



▶ 79

- 79] However, the image of Sailor Moon—remaining fourteen years old while fighting evil in a school uniform—was embraced by many girls as a completely new form of “metamorphosis.” Another important aspect is that she fights as part of a team. This marked a clear departure from earlier girl heroes, who typically fought in isolation. However, some things remained unchanged.

“Moonlight Legend” 1992

I'm sorry for not being honest / I could say it if I were in a dream / My mind is on the verge of short-circuiting / I want to see you right now / Moonlight that makes me want to cry / Midnight when I can't even call / Because I'm so innocent, what should I do? / My heart is a kaleidoscope / Guided by the moonlight / We meet again and again / Counting the twinkling stars, I predict the future of our love / We were born on the same Earth—a miracle romance / I believe in it—a miracle romance

- 80 】 In this theme song, we can find phrases such as “I predict the future of our love” and “miracle romance.”

Sailor Moon: A Love Story

- ▶ Sailor Moon and Tuxedo Mask
 - ▶ “The Future of Our Love”
- ▶ The Spirit of Girls’ Manga
- ▶ Rejecting:
 - ▶ Male Attire
 - ▶ Growing Up
- ▶ Embracing: Romantic Love

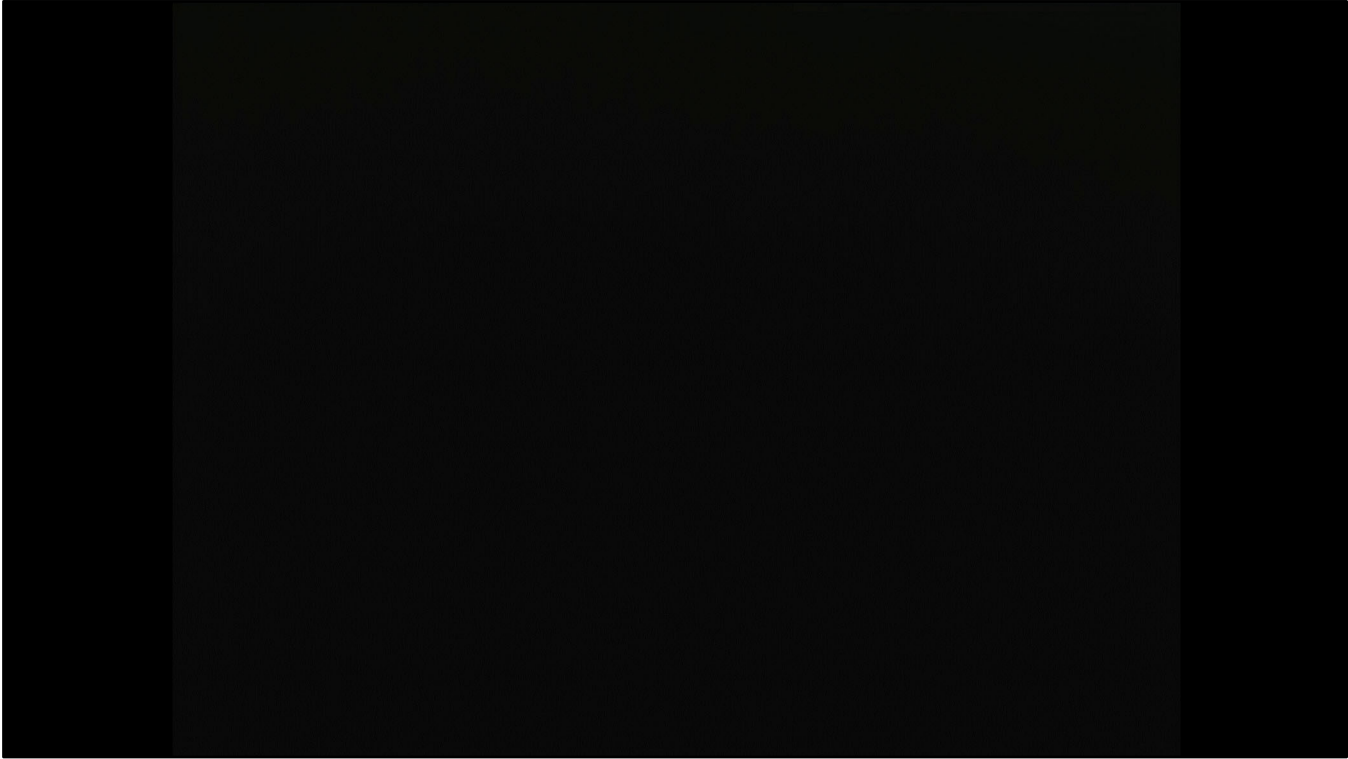


- 81] True to the spirit of girls’ manga, *Sailor Moon* is also a love story. The main character is Sailor Moon, and this man is her partner. He is called Tuxedo Mask because he wears a tuxedo, which is a rather straightforward name. When Sailor Moon faces a crisis, he comes to her aid. In this sense, the central theme of the story can be described as “the future of our love.” While rejecting traditional male attire and the idea of growing up, girls continued to embrace romance.

The End of Male Attire

▶ 82

82] At this point, you might be wondering what happened to male attire. The answer is this.



輪舞 Revolution 1997

潔(いさぎ)よくカッコ良(よ)く生(い)きて行(ゆ)こう... たとえ
2人(ふたり)離(はな)ればなれになっても... Take my revolution 光(ひかり)
差(さ)す校庭(garden)手(て)をとり合(あ)い誓(ちか)い合(あ)ったなぐさめ
合(あ)ったもう恋(こい)は二度(にど)としないよって頬(ほお)を寄(よ)せ
あつてうつる写真(しゃしん)の笑顔(えがお)に少(すこ)しの淋(さび)しさつめ
込(こ)んで夢(ゆめ)を見(み)て涙(なみだ)して傷(きず)ついても
現実(げんじつ)はがむしゃらに來(く)るし自分(じぶん)の居場所(いばしょ)
存在価値(そんざいかち)を見(み)つけたい今日(きょう)までの自分(じぶん)を
潔(いさぎ)よく脱(ぬ)ぎ捨(す)てる裸(はだか)になる自由(じゆう)を舞(ま)う
薔薇(ばら)のように たとえ2人(ふたり)離(はな)ればなれになっても
私(わたし)は世界(せかい)を変(か)える

Revolution 1997

Let's live with dignity and style... / Even if we end up
apart... Take my revolution / In the garden bathed in
sunlight / We held hands, made vows, and comforted each
other / Saying, "I'll never fall in love again" / Pressing our
cheeks together / I packed a little loneliness into the
smiles in the photo / Dreaming, crying, getting hurt /
Reality still comes at us relentlessly / I want to find my
place, my reason for being / I'll shed my past self up to
today / Strip it all away, bare myself / Like a rose dancing in
freedom / Even if we're torn apart / I'll change the world

- 85] Let's live with dignity and style... / Even if we end up apart... Take my revolution / In the garden bathed in sunlight / We held hands, made vows, and comforted each other / Saying, "I'll never fall in love again" / Pressing our cheeks together / I packed a little loneliness into the smiles in the photo / Dreaming, crying, getting hurt / Reality still comes at us relentlessly / I want to find my place, my reason for being / I'll shed my past self up to today / Strip it all away, bare myself / Like a rose dancing in freedom / Even if we're torn apart / I'll change the world

Revolutionary Girl Utena 1997



- ▶ Director: Ikuhara Kunihiko (1964–)
- ▶ Right: Tenjō Utena
 - ▶ Saved by a prince in her childhood
 - ▶ Longs to become a prince herself
- ▶ Left: Himemiya Anthy
 - ▶ The “Rose Bride”
 - ▶ The power “to revolutionize the world”

▶ 86

- 86] This is *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, directed by Ikuhara Kunihiko. The character on the right, with pink hair, is Tenjō Utena—a girl who, having been saved by a prince in her childhood, longs to become a prince herself. On the left is Himemiya Anthy, known as the “Rose Bride.” It is said that whoever is engaged to her will gain the “power to revolutionize the world.”

Revolution 1997

Let's live with dignity and style... / Even if we end up
apart... Take my revolution / In the garden bathed in
sunlight / **We held hands, made vows, and comforted each
other / Saying, "I'll never fall in love again"** / Pressing our
cheeks together / I packed a little loneliness into the
smiles in the photo / Dreaming, crying, getting hurt /
Reality still comes at us relentlessly / **I want to find my
place, my reason for being / I'll shed my past self up to
today / Strip it all away, bare myself / Like a rose dancing in
freedom / Even if we're torn apart / I'll change the world**

- 87] In this opening theme, she sings, "I'll never fall in love again" or "**I want to find my place, my reason for being.**" Yes, girls no longer wanted to fall in love or simply grow up as adults expected them to.

Revolutionary Girl Utena 1997



- ▶ **The Central Relationships**
- ▶ Not between boys and girls
- ▶ But between girls
- Rejecting romantic relationships with boys

▶ 88

- 88] In this story, the central relationships are not between boys and girls, but between girls. These girls reject romantic relationships with boys.

Utena's Male Attire




- ▶ Not Becoming Male
- ▶ The Result of Her Own Choice
 - ↔ Unlike Sapphire or Oscar
 - Not Imposed by Fate or Necessity
- ▶ Incorporates Feminine Design
 - ▶ The End of the Girl Hero in Male Attire

89] Although Utena wears male attire, she does not desire to become male. Her attire is the result of her own choice, unlike Sapphire or Oscar, who were compelled to assume male roles as part of an unavoidable destiny. And then, although she wears male attire, it has a distinctly feminine design. This marks the end of the girl hero in male attire. After Utena, the figure of the girl hero in male attire largely disappears from girls' anime and manga.

Rejection of Adulthood and Love

▶ 90

90] At the end of the twentieth century, girls came to reject both adulthood and romantic love.



Japan in the 2000s

91

- 91 】 At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the ideal form of girls' metamorphosis had changed in this way.



DANZEN! ふたりはプリキュア 2004

プリキュア×4 プリティでキュアキュア ふたりは プリッキュ
ア~! 一難^(いちなん) 去^(さ) っ、また一難^(いちなん) ぶっちゃけ
ありえない!! 制服^(せいふく) 着^(き) ててもふたりは おちゃく
ちやタフだし お互^(たが) いピンチを乗^(の) り越^(こ) えるたび
強^(つよ) く近^(ちか) くなるね☆ your best! my best! 生^(い) きて
るんだから 失敗^(しっばい) なんてもじやない! 笑^(わら) う門^(か)
ど)に福^(ふく) 来^(きた) るでしょ! ネガティブだって ブツ飛^(と)
ぶう~! 生命^(いのち) の花^(はな) 咲^(さ) かせて! 思^(おも) いっき
り~ もっとバリバリ!! プリキュア×4 プリティでキュアキュア
ふたりは プリッキュア~!

Danzen! We Are Pretty Cure 2004

Pretty Cure×4 / Pretty and Cure, Cure—we're Pretty Cure~! / One crisis after another—seriously, this is crazy!! / Even in our uniforms, we're super tough, you know / Every time we overcome a crisis together, we grow stronger and closer☆ / Your best! My best! / Since we're alive, failure is nothing! / Good things come to those who laugh, right? Even negativity gets blown away~! / Let the flower of life bloom! Go all out~ Even more fiercely!! / Pretty Cure ×4, / Pretty and Cure Cure, the two of us are Pretty Cure~!

- 94 】 Pretty Cure × 4 / Pretty and Cure, Cure—we're Pretty Cure~! / One crisis after another—seriously, this is crazy!! / Even in our uniforms, we're super tough, you know / Every time we overcome a crisis together, we grow stronger and closer☆ / Your best! My best! / Since we're alive, failure is nothing! / Good things come to those who laugh, right? Even negativity gets blown away~! / Let the flower of life bloom! Go all out~ Even more fiercely!! / Pretty Cure × 4, / Pretty and Cure Cure, the two of us are Pretty Cure~!

Futari wa Pretty Cure/Pretty Cure 2004

- ▶ Anime adaptation
 - ▶ 2004-2005
- ▶ The first installment in the Pretty Cure metaseries
 - ▶ Girls' Metamorphosis
 - ▶ Into Legendary Warriors to Fight Evil



▶ 95

- 95] This is *Futari wa PreCure*, the first installment of the PreCure series, which began in 2004. Its story structure closely follows that of *Sailor Moon*, with girls metamorphose into legendary warriors to fight evil. However, there is one crucial difference between the PreCure series and *Sailor Moon*. While *Sailor Moon* relies primarily on magical attacks, the PreCure characters fight through direct physical combat, using punches and kicks.

Difference between *Pretty Cure* and *Sailor Moon*

- ▶ *Sailor Moon*
 - ▶ Magical Attacks
- ▶ *Pretty Cure*
 - ▶ Physical Combat
 - ▶ Being Badly Hit



▶ 96

- 96] However, there is one crucial difference between the *Pretty Cure* series and *Sailor Moon*. While *Sailor Moon* relies primarily on magical attacks, the *Pretty Cure* characters fight through direct physical combat, using punches and kicks. That is why they sometimes end up beaten up like this.

A Key Concept of *Pretty Cure*

「女の子だって暴れたい!」

(On'nanoko datte abaretai!)

Girls want to fight, too!

▶ 97

- 97] The reason for these differences lies in the key concept of *PreCure*: “On'nanoko datte abaretai!” — “Girls want to fight, too!”

Metamorphosed Costumes



- ▶ **Very Pretty Costumes**
 - ▶ Ribbons and Heart Motifs
 - ▶ Not Uniform ↔ Sailor Moon
- ▶ **Emphasis on Individuality**
 - ▶ Able to Wear Attire They Like
 - ▶ Attire That Suits Them Best

98] There are still other differences between PreCure and Sailor Moon. Their transformed costumes are very pretty, featuring ribbons and heart motifs. Furthermore, their costumes are not uniforms, unlike those of Sailor Moon. This reflects an emphasis on individuality. They can wear attire that they like and that suits them best.

Pretty Cure is not Love story

- ▶ *Pretty Cure* ↔ *Sailor Moon*
- ▶ The Central Theme
 - ▶ Friendship Between Girls
 - ▶ “Sisterhood”
 - ▶ Romantic Love X



▶ 99

- 99 】 In addition, *PreCure* is not a love story, unlike *Sailor Moon*. Its central theme is friendship between girls, or “sisterhood”; therefore, romantic love is no longer necessary. The world of *PreCure* exists only for girls.



100 】 Like this: “Motto bari-bari” — “Even more fiercely.” In this world, girls exist independently of boys.

Toughness
Sisterhood
Non-romantic

101] It highlights three key elements: toughness, sisterhood, and non-romantic relationships.

Girls Empower Themselves

▶ 102

102] PreCure in 2004 emphasizes girls empowering themselves.

The Shifts in 2010s

▶ The 1990s–2000s


▶ Emphasis on Sisterhood

▶ Rejection of Romantic Love, Men,
and Adulthood

▶ The Shifts in 2010s

▶ 103

103] In the 1990s–2000s, there was an emphasis on sisterhood and a rejection of romantic love, men, and adulthood. However, in the 2010s, this situation shifted. Girls did not remain in this girl-centered world.



Japan in the 2010s

104

104] They began to enter society and started to desire growing up. Like this:



HUGっと!未来☆ドリーマー 2018

イエイ! HUGっとGOOD プリキュア! お仕事うんと盛りだくさん! 空を
びゅびゅんとパイロット キャビンアテンダント パン屋さん 本屋さん ま
だまだキュンと恋したい? 誰かと一緒LIFE! 無・限・大! きっかけは目
の前に いっぱい溢れてええと、どうしよっかな ファイト1.2.3! ピカピカ
光るような ヒント集めてなりたい自分 見つけちゃおう ファッション
リーダー Show time! アイドルONステージ! 音楽に芸術+イラストレー
ター デザイナー ウェイトレス メイクアップ レッツダンス ノリノリでHey
カモン! 世界中トラベラー 超テンション社長 Yes! 色んな道へのトビラ
開いてみたら 夢見る ドリーミーなハート描いて 飛び出そうよ グツとく
る 好きのチカラ信じていつかぎゅっと抱きしめたくなるんだ そんな
未来を HUGっと! プリキュアは一い! 先生どうぞ ほかには? エンジ
ニア 研究者 お花屋さん 看護師さん 無・限・大! イェーイ!

HUG! Future☆Dreamer 2018

Yay! HUGtto GOOD PreCure! So many jobs to do! Flying through the sky as a pilot Cabin attendant Baker, bookstore owner, much more want to experience a fluttering romance? Life with someone! Limitless! Opportunities abound right before our eyes Hmm, what should I do? Fight 1, 2, 3! Gather sparkling hints Let's find the person we want to be Fashion leader Show time! Idol on stage! Music, art + illustrator, designer Waitress, makeup artist, let's dance Get into the groove, hey, come on! World traveler Super-energy CEO Yes! Open the doors to all sorts of paths Draw a dreamy heart and take off Believe in the power of love that touches your heart Someday, you'll want to hold it tight, that kind of future HUGtto! PreCure Yes! Teacher, please, anything else? Engineers, researchers, florists, nurses... Infinite! Yay!

▶ 107

- 107] Yay! HUGtto GOOD PreCure! So many jobs to do! Flying through the sky as a pilot Cabin attendant Baker, bookstore owner, still want to experience a fluttering romance? Life with someone! Limitless! Opportunities abound right before our eyes Hmm, what should I do? Fight 1, 2, 3! Gather sparkling hints Let's find the person we want to be Fashion leader Show time! Idol on stage! Music, art + illustrator, designer Waitress, makeup artist, let's dance Get into the groove, hey, come on! World traveler Super-energy CEO Yes! Open the doors to all sorts of paths Draw a dreamy heart and take off Believe in the power of love that touches your heart Someday, you'll want to hold it tight, that kind of future HUGtto! PreCure Yes! Teacher, please, anything else? Engineers, researchers, florists, nurses... Infinite! Yay!

HUGtto! PreCure (Hug! PreCure)

- ▶ 15th Anniversary, 2018
- ▶ The Central Theme
 - ▶ “Raising children” and “Work”
 - ▶ A Wide Variety of Choices



▶ 108

- 108 】 This is an ending theme of *HUGtto! PreCure* (also known as *Hug! PreCure*), released in 2018 to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the PreCure series. Its central themes are raising children and work in society. The phrase “raising children” may seem to reinforce the idea that women should become mothers and remain in the home. But this is not entirely correct. “Raising children” is just one of many possible choices. In this song, these PreCures present a wide variety of choices for girls, as follows:

“So many jobs to do!”

Pilot, Cabin Attendant, Baker, Bookstore Owner,
Much more want to experience a fluttering
romance? Life with someone! Fashion Leader,
Idol, Music, Art, Illustrator, Designer, Waitress,
Makeup Artist, Dance, World Traveler, Super-
energy CEO, Teacher, Engineers, Researchers,
Florists, Nurses

▶ 109

- 109] Pilot, Cabin Attendant, Baker, Bookstore Owner, Still want to experience a fluttering romance? Life with someone! Fashion Leader, Idol, Music, Art, Illustrator, Designer, Waitress, Makeup Artist, Dance, World Traveler, Super-energy CEO, Teacher, Engineers, Researchers, Florists, Nurses, etc.

They present a wide variety of choices.

“So many jobs to do!”

Pilot, Cabin Attendant, Baker, Bookstore Owner,
**Much more want to experience a fluttering
romance?** Life with someone! Fashion Leader,
Idol, Music, Art, Illustrator, Designer, Waitress,
Makeup Artist, Dance, World Traveler, Super-
energy CEO, Teacher, Engineers, Researchers,
Florists, Nurses

▶ 110

- 110] Please pay attention to the phrase, “Much more want to experience a fluttering romance?” This suggests that love is not rejected, but is instead presented as one of many possible choices in the future.

“So many jobs to do!”

Pilot, Cabin Attendant, Baker, Bookstore Owner,
Much more want to experience a fluttering
romance? **Life with someone!** Fashion Leader,
Idol, Music, Art, Illustrator, Designer, Waitress,
Makeup Artist, Dance, World Traveler, Super-
energy CEO, Teacher, Engineers, Researchers,
Florists, Nurses

▶ 111

- 111] The following phrase, “Life with someone!”, is also important. The term “someone” can be a man, a woman, or anyone else.

Life with Someone!

- ▶ **The Right: Cure Amour**
 - ▶ Ruru Amour
 - ▶ An Android
- ▶ **The Left: Cure Macherie**
 - ▶ Aizaki Emiru
 - ▶ Primary School Student
 - ▶ Choice to Live with Amour

▶ 112



- 112] In fact, it does not even have to be a human being. Cure Amour, on the right, is an android rather than a human, and Aizaki Emiru, the human on the left, chooses to live with her. It truly represents “life with someone.”

The Shifts in *HUGtto! PreCure*

- ▶ No Longer Rejects
 - ▶ Growing Up and Entering Society
 - ▶ Falling in Love and Getting Married
- ▶ From a Uniform “Ideal Image of Women”
 - ▶ To Diverse and Pluralistic Female Identities
- ▶ Toward a More Realistic Adult Life

The main character will get married and have children in the future.

▶ 113



- 113] In this way, *HUGtto! PreCure* reflects a shift toward an attitude that no longer rejects growing up, entering the workforce, or falling in love and getting married. It marks a transition from a uniform “ideal image of women” to a diverse and pluralistic understanding of female identities. Furthermore, rather than withdrawing from society and remaining within the bonds of sisterhood, the characters actively aspire to a more realistic adult life. Their metamorphosis represents their future-oriented determination.

Hirogaru Sky! PreCure



- ▶ Soaring Sky! Pretty Cure in 2023
- ▶ 20th Anniversary
- ▶ Unprecedented Settings
 - ▶ Coller of Main PreCure: **Blue**
 - ▶ **Male** PreCure: Orange
 - ▶ **Adult** PreCure :Yellow
- ▶ A Bond That Transcends Gender and Age
 - ▶ The Search for One's True Self
 - ▶ A Continuous Pursuit of Self-Actualization

114] These shifts have become even more pronounced in recent years. This is *Hirogaru Sky! PreCure*, released in 2023 to commemorate the twentyth anniversary of the PreCure series.

The setting of this story is novel: the theme color of the main PreCure is blue, unlike most previous main characters, who wore pink. She is free from the stereotype that “girls must like pink.” She is not the only PreCure who breaks the mold. The orange PreCure is a boy, and the yellow one is an adult. They have shattered the stereotype that “PreCures should be teenage girls”.

In this way, today’s anime for girls presents an image of women who, through bonds that transcend gender and age, continually strive toward self-realization as they explore who they want to become.

Conclusion

115

Metamorphosis in the 1950s–1960s

▶ The Dream of Girls

- ▶ Sapphire, Akko-chan
- ▶ Desire to escape reality
- ▶ Denial of Girls' Own Situation



▶ 116

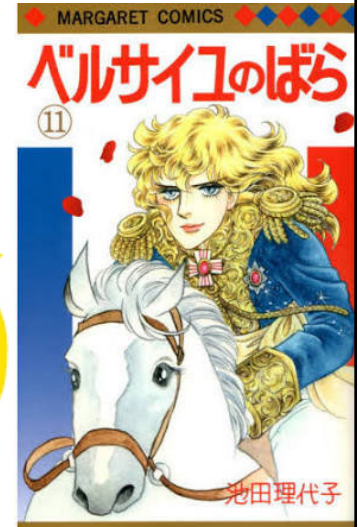
- 116] In the 1950s and 1960s, metamorphosis represented a dream of becoming someone else. Characters such as Sapphire and Akko-chan expressed a desire to escape reality, often denying their own situation as girls.

Metamorphosis in the 1970s–1980s

▶ Desire for Participation in Society

- ▶ Oscar, Momo
- ▶ Behaving Like Men or As Independent Career Woman
- ▶ Splendid Isolation

魔法のプリンセス
ミチギーモモ



▶ 117

- 117 】 In the 1970s and 1980s, metamorphosis came to reflect a growing desire for participation in society like Oscar and Momo. In order to succeed, they often behaved like men or tried to establish themselves as independent career women. However, this pursuit frequently resulted in a state of splendid isolation, as they struggled within a male-dominated society.

Metamorphosis in the 1990s

- ▶ **Rejection of Adulthood and Men**
 - ▶ Sailor Moon, Utena
 - ▶ Remaining in Girlhood
 - ▶ Bonds of Sisterhood
- ▶ **After the Collapse of the Bubble Economy**

▶ 118



- 118] In the 1990s, metamorphosis came to reflect a rejection of adulthood and male-centered norms like Sailor Moon and Utena. They no longer desire to become adults or imitate men. Instead, they chose to remain in girlhood, emphasizing their identity as girls. At the same time, strong bonds of sisterhood became central. Rather than pursuing romantic relationships or integration into adult society, these characters formed close relationships with other girls, creating a self-contained world based on mutual support and emotional connection. In the post-bubble era, they could no longer find dreams in real society.

Metamorphosis after the 2000s

- ▶ Especially in The 2010s
 - ▶ Self-Affirmation
 - ▶ Exploration of Diverse Life Choices
 - ▶ No Longer Escaping or Imitating



- 119 】 Since the 2000s, and especially in the 2010s, metamorphosis has come to represent self-affirmation and the exploration of diverse life choices. Rather than escaping reality or imitating others, girls are now depicted as actively shaping their own futures.

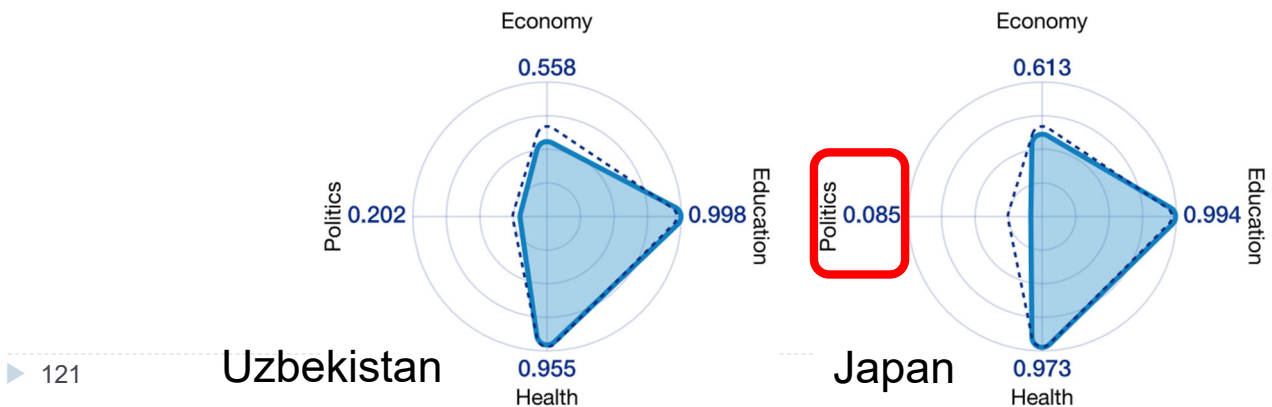
Girls **Now**
look toward
the **Future.**

▶ 120

120] Yes, Girls now look toward the future.

WEF's *Global Gender Gap Report 2025*

- ▶ Gender Equality in Japan: Not Enough
 - ▶ 118th out of 148 countries (cf. Uzbekistan: 110th)
 - ▶ Particularly Low in Politics.



121] Finally, gender equality in Japan remains insufficient. According to the World Economic Forum's Report 2025, Japan ranks 118th out of 148 countries. Incidentally, Uzbekistan ranks 110th, placing it above Japan.

Japan's score in politics is particularly low.

Japanese girls' Metamorphosis

- ▶ **Girls in the 20th Century**
 - ▶ Escaping from Reality
 - ▶ Male Attire / Behaving Like Men or Adults
 - ▶ Remaining in “Sisterhood”
- ▶ **PreCure in the 21st Century**
 - ▶ Empowering themselves to achieve their own goals
 - ▶ Remembering the Future, Living in the Present

▶ 122

122] In the twentieth century, girls were often portrayed as escaping from reality, adopting male roles or remaining within sisterhood. However, in the twenty-first century, girls were no longer content with such a complacent situation. As seen in PreCure, girls empower themselves to achieve their own goals, balancing future aspirations with living in the present. Girls have moved from escaping reality to actively.

I would like to conclude this lecture by pointing out that Japanese girls are also undergoing this kind of metamorphosis.