



University
of Victoria

Graduate Studies

Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

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BA (University of Victoria, 2015)

**“Make-Up!: The Mythic Narrative and Transformation as a Mechanism
for Personal and Spiritual Growth in Magical Girl (*Mahō Shōjo*) Anime”**

Department of Pacific and Asian Studies

August 14, 2017
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B017

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. M. Cody Poulton, Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Michael Bodden, Department of Pacific and Asian Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:

Dr. Hélène Cazes, Department of French, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:

Dr. Mihai Sima, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies

Abstract

The *mahō shōjo* or “magical girl”, genre of Japanese animation and manga has maintained a steady, prolific presence for nearly fifty years. Magical Girl series for the most part feature a female protagonist who is between the ages of nine and fourteen - not a little girl but not yet a woman. She is either born with or bestowed upon the ability to transform into a magical alter-ego and must save the world from a clear and present enemy. The magical girl must to work to balance her “normal life” – domestic obligations, educational obligations, and interpersonal relationships – with her duty to protect the world.

I will argue that the "transformation" of an ordinary girl into a magical girl heroine is a mechanism of personal and spiritual growth within a liminal space that provides the heroine and the female fans who read these series with the tools needed to grow in a supportive community. I will build a framework using Joseph Campbell's mythic narrative and Vladimir Propp's folktale morphology to illustrate how the narrative pushes the heroine to grow and mature in a way that honors her individual self. Furthermore, I will illustrate how female fans disseminate these works as consumers, creators, and producers. Magical girl series, particularly ones marketed to school girl audiences, are published in manga magazines that encourage engagement between the readers and artists while initiating young readers into the world of manga.