Losing the War, Winning the Pooh: Ishii Momoko and the Construction of Contemporary Children’s Literature in Postwar Japan

by

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The Department of East Asian Studies
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Abstract

The beginning of contemporary Japanese children’s literature dates back to the 1950s. Presently, the conventions of the genre has become accepted as truths about what types of books are appropriate for children. However, the conventions established in the 50s and 60s developed under the specific social conditions of Japan’s loss of the Second World War, the ensuing U.S. Occupation, and the Cold War. The state of children’s literature in present day Japan reflects a historically constructed image of childhood prevalent in writing, translating, publishing, and distributing children’s books. This thesis focuses on the career of Ishii Momoko, one of the most important figures in shaping postwar Japanese children’s literature who received a fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation to study in America from 1954 to 55 and disseminated the knowledge she acquired upon her return, in an attempt to outline the influences of postwar social forces on children’s literature.
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Introduction

Children’s Literature in a Haisenkoku

The trajectory of the history of Japanese children’s literature shifted significantly after the end of World War II in 1945. Children’s literature developed exceedingly nationalistic and militaristic characteristics as the war escalated in the late 30s and early 40s. However, these developments came to an abrupt halt after Japan became a haisenkoku (a country that has lost the war), when nationalism and militarism were replaced by individualism and democracy as part of the attempt to rebuild postwar Japan according to the American ideological orientation. The new trajectory for children’s literature in postwar led to the development of the genre into what is now considered “contemporary Japanese children’s literature.” While it is difficult to clearly define the characteristics of contemporary Japanese children’s literature, it is much easier to define what it is not—it is neither nationalistic nor militaristic. One way of understanding the postwar history of the genre is to derive its identity from its difference from not only wartime children’s literature but that of the entire era under the imperial regime.

We could begin by studying the trajectory that children’s literature was on during the war. Where was the genre headed and what would have happened if it continued in the same direction? According to Torigoe Shin¹, at the time of the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, “children’s literature [jidō bungaku] was renamed to little countrymen’s literature [shōkokumin bungaku], and it was used as a method of urging children to participate in the war.”³ This was a deliberate policy of the Home Ministry (Naimushō) of the Empire of Japan to

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¹ Japanese names are written surname first except when the author publishes predominantly in English, in which case the given name is written first.

² Shōkokumin has commonly been translated as “little citizen” in English scholarship. However, “citizen” does not capture the strong sense of subjugation to the nationalistic cause invested in the term shōkokumin. For this reason, I have decided to use “little countrymen” in this thesis in proposition of an alternative representation of the term.

³ Torigoe Shin, Hajimete manabu Nihon jidō bungakushi (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2001), 240. All translations of Japanese texts are my own unless otherwise noted.
normalize the name of the genre that had previously been referred to using many different names including the two above and others such as dōwa (children’s story) or shōnen bungaku (young people’s literature). Considering the history of the term shōkokumin, which came into use during the Meiji period (1868-1912) as a token of nation building and the idea of children as loyal subjects of the emperor, its choice as the official name for children’s literature reflects the intention of the military government to use books as a way of instilling nationalist, imperialist, as well as militarist values. Had Japan not lost the war, Japanese children’s literature may still be shōkokumin bungaku and Japanese children themselves may still be considered shōkokumin.

The disappearance of the notion of shōkokumin in post WWII Japan gives us another definition of what contemporary Japanese children’s literature is not; it is not a literature for little countrymen. The identity of children’s literature in postwar Japan was in many ways built upon a negation of the concept of the shōkokumin bungaku—a negation of the trends and standards of children’s literature under imperial rule. The reason for this was that the rapid shift to democracy immediately following the end of the Second World War changed the way children were perceived in politics, society, and law: from subjects of the emperor to individual people with their own set of rights. As a haisenkoku, Japan was subject to the Allied Occupation, also known as the U.S. Occupation, “headed by General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP). Despite the ‘Allied Powers’ in the title and the presence of some British and Commonwealth officials, the Occupation was essentially American.”

This meant that the changes in political structures effected by the Occupation were modelled on those of America, and in consequence Japan adopted an American model of laws pertaining to children. The child of democratic Japan was a different child from that of imperial Japan and the difference needed to be accounted for even in literature.

At the heart of the new political model was the new Constitution of Japan enacted in 1947, which reinscribed the place of children in national, political, and social discourse. Article 13 of the new constitution states that “[a]ll of the people shall be respected as individuals. Their right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness shall, to the extent that it does not interfere with the public

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welfare, be the supreme consideration in legislation and in other governmental affairs," which is a significant change from the previous Constitution of the Empire of Japan that referred to the people as “Japanese subjects” who, according to Article 20, were “amenable to service in the Army.” Furthermore, in 1948, the National Diet abolished the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo*), a document issued by the Meiji government in 1890 and required to be read aloud by school students. It was meant to provide “clear guidelines concerning the appropriate approach for moral education.” Although the rescript contains generic morals such as filiality, modesty, and benevolence, it contains passages that go against the new constitution such as “should emergency arise, offer yourselves courageously to the State; and thus guard and maintain the prosperity of Our Imperial Throne coeval with heaven and earth.” The abolition of the rescript is symbolic of the direct impact that the new constitution had on moral education of children. With such a drastic shift in the perceived identity of its readership (Japanese children), the identity of the genre adapted accordingly. In postwar Japan, the common term for children’s literature became *jidō bungaku* and all other names for the genre went out of use. Similar to the renaming of the genre in 1937, the use of *jidō bungaku* was a normalization (or a re-normalization) built upon a differentiation from its predecessor, *shōkokumin bungaku*. *Shōkokumin bungaku* was not the only trend that postwar Japanese *jidō bungaku* differentiated itself from. The entire tradition of prewar children’s literature was disavowed and a completely new concept of a literature for children was sought. Beginning immediately from the end of the war in 1945 and all the way into the 60s, critics, scholars, and writers of Japanese children’s literature actively criticized the most prominent stylistic tradition in prewar children’s literature.

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commonly called *dōwa* (tales *wa* 話 for the juvenile *dō* 童). The *dōwa* tradition began in the Taishō period (1912-26) as a movement toward an artistic approach to children’s stories, elevating the genre to a legitimate form of literature as opposed to the likes of fairy tales (*otogibanashi*) that were previously the popular style. In the 50s, critics such as Ishii Momoko (1907-2008) and Furuta Taruhi (1927-2014) advocated a break from the *dōwa* tradition. Miyagawa Takeo describes, “*dōwa*, which were written in a figurative language and were often in the form of short stories, were much like poetry. However, it was proposed [by the likes of Ishii and Furuta] that literature for children should be prosaic and be structured like novels.”⁹ In accordance with this discourse, two novel length books representative of the new direction were published in 1959: Inui Tomiko’s *Kokage no ie no kobitotachi* (Little people in the tree shade house) and Satō Satoru’s *Dare mo shiranai chiisana kuni* (The small country that no one knows). Miyagawa suggests that the year of their publication, 1959, marked the beginning of contemporary children’s literature (*gendai jidō bungaku*).¹⁰ Although this beginning was well after the end of the war, it was built upon the discourse of difference that arose from the social changes that Japan was subject to since 1945 as a *haisenkoku*. “Contemporary” in contemporary Japanese children’s literature is more than a marker of time. It marks a stylistic and ideological distinction—a distinction of difference from children’s literature of imperial Japan. The result of this distinction was the need for a new direction, and just as the Occupation drove political and social structures of postwar Japan toward an American model, the new trajectory for the postwar Japanese children’s literature moved rapidly toward mirroring the ideologies and characteristics of children’s literature in America.

**Ishii Momoko and the Foreign Influence**

Ishii Momoko, as mentioned above, was one of the most influential figures in problematizing the appropriateness of prewar conventions of *dōwa* as a literature for children. She advocated a

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¹⁰ Ibid.
break with the past and helped set a new direction for children’s literature that was largely based on standards and ideologies learned from the United States, Canada, and Britain. The wide acceptance of her ideas was perhaps related to the social atmosphere of haisenkoku Japan in which, in John Dower’s words, “the losers wished both to forget the past and to transcend it.”

Promoting a forgetting of the Japanese children’s literature of the past and searching for new directions outside of Japan was likely a significant factor in the persuasive power of her arguments.

Ishii benefitted from the postwar environment not only for the public acceptance of ideas she derived from foreign traditions of children’s literature, but also for the opportunities that became available to travel and study abroad. In the 1950s and 60s, many Japanese intellectuals were given the opportunity to travel abroad to the U.S. on various government and non-government scholarships and grants such as those offered by the Fulbright Program, and organizations such as the Asia Foundation and the Ford Foundation conducted various programs to facilitate U.S.-Japan interaction.

The biggest turning point in Ishii’s career came in 1954, when she was awarded a Creative Fellowship by the Rockefeller Foundation which funded a year-long research trip in the U.S. (where she stayed for most of the year), as well as Canada and Britain. Ishii began a career in children’s literature in the early 1930s as an editor and steadily gained a name for herself in the 50s by becoming the first editor of the Iwanami shōnen bunko (Iwanami youth library) in 1950 and winning the Monbu Daijin shō (Minister of Education Award) in 1951. However, it was only after returning from the U.S. in 1955 that she actively sought to effect changes in the way children’s literature was written, published, and distributed in Japan. The knowledge she gained from seeing the state of children’s literature in the three countries she visited no doubt allowed her to view Japanese children’s literature from a new perspective and gave her new ideas for change.


Ishii was not only an editor, publisher, and critic. She also wrote and translated many children’s books throughout her career. However, other than her 1947 children’s novel, *Non-chan kumo ni noru* (Non-chan rides on a cloud) for which she received the Monbu Daijin shō, Ishii’s own works as a writer of children’s literature have not gained much attention, and certainly have not had the same impact as her non-fiction writings and translations. In fact, her most significant contributions to writing children’s literature came from her translations of English language children’s literature. She translated some of the most recognizable works such as *Winnie-the-Pooh* (*Kuma no Pā-san*, 1940), *The Wind in the Willows* (*Hikigaeru no bōken*, 1950), and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (*Tomu Sōyā no bōken*, 1952) that continue to hold their place as classics of children’s literature and influence the writing and translating of children’s literature to this day. The world-renowned animation director Miyazaki Hayao writes in his book *Hon e no tobira: Iwanami shōnen bunko o kataru* (The gate to books: About the Iwanami shōnen bunko), “in terms of books for children, Ishii Momoko is someone whom I cannot but respect. She is a special kanpeitaisha [a Shinto shrine of the highest level]. If Ishii Momoko translated it, you have to read it. There are many books in Japan that have survived to this day because of Ishii’s translation.” Miyazaki also confesses that he never met Ishii because he was too afraid of meeting such a great person. Ishii reached a preeminent status with her translations, and as with Miyazaki, many contemporary authors and other storytellers of different mediums grew up within a culture of translation that Ishii helped shape.

In shaping postwar children’s literature, Ishii acted like an importer of foreign culture and ideas, who had her main trade routes in the United States. Certainly, her work as a translator introduced many children’s books popular in America. But also as a publisher, she consulted American book lists and American trends in criticism, introducing to Japan the same books that were being read by American children. As early as 1936, Ishii had come into contact with two books by

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14 Ibid., 87.
15 Ishii states in *Jidō bungaku no tabi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2015), that she found Miller’s books 25 years before her second trip to the U.S. in 1961. Takeuchi Miki, a Japanese researcher, states in her book *Ishii Momoko no hon'yaku wa naze kodomo o hikitsukeru no ka: “koe o yakusu” buntai no himitsu* (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2014) that Ishii read Miller’s books in 1929, subtracting 25 years from Ishii’s first trip to the U.S. in 1954. However, this
Bertha Mahoney Miller (1882-1969), *Realms of Gold in Children’s Books* (1929) and *Five Years of Children’s Books* (1936), which contain extensive book lists of children’s literature.\(^{16}\) Afterwards, she became a regular reader of *The Horn Book*, an American magazine founded by Miller that contained book recommendation lists, criticisms, and reviews about children’s literature.\(^{17}\) Sometime before the beginning of the Pacific War, Ishii sent a letter to Miller, after which they regularly exchanged letters.\(^{18}\) In Ishii’s book, *Jidō bungaku no tabi* (*A journey of children’s literature*, 1981), which outlines her experiences during her one-year stay in the U.S., she describes how Miller voluntarily took an active role in planning her schedule for the entire duration.\(^{19}\) With the support of the Rockefeller Foundation’s fellowship, Ishii’s epistolary relationship with Miller was solidified into a lifelong friendship. Such personal connections along with the long-standing interest in American trends allowed Ishii to access and distribute knowledge about not only American but also other foreign children’s literature that was available through the United States.

A key concept and system that Ishii imported from the U.S. was that of the children’s library. Spaces where children could freely access books, choose for themselves what they want to read, and have a place to sit and read were not readily available in Japan until the 70s. During Ishii’s one-year stay in America, she visited many public children’s libraries in both the U.S. and Canada and also studied library systems for three months at the Carnegie Library School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After returning to Japan, she began an experiment by opening a home library for children called Katsura Bunko in her own home in Ogikubo, Tokyo, in 1958. In 1965, she published a book called *Kodomo no toshokan* (*Children’s library*) detailing her experience of running the library for the first seven years. The book was widely read and Katsura Bunko became a model for home libraries for children in Japan that proliferated in the 60s and 70s. She

\(^{16}\) Ishii, *Jidō bungaku no tabi*, 76.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 77.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 78.

\(^{19}\) Ibid., 5-6.
was also a founding member of the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai (Home library research group), which was active in supporting home libraries across Japan as well as the movement for establishing children’s sections in public libraries, a work which came to fruition in the late 70s with the installation of children’s sections in more than 70% of the thousand plus public libraries across the country. With these and many other contributions, Ishii’s life and work represent the very path that children’s literature took to become what it is today—a path away from prewar Japanese children’s literature and towards an American model.

There have been numerous studies on Ishii in Japanese language scholarship on her life, authored works, and translations. However, scarcely any talk about the postwar politics that significantly influenced her career by creating opportunities for international interaction and generating the social environment that allowed her to make the contributions that she made. It is also difficult to find works discussing Ishii’s ideologies regarding children’s literature and children, while those of influential figures of prewar Japanese children’s literature such as Iwaya Sazanami (1870-1933) and Ogawa Mimei (1882-1961) have been researched in depth. It is also important to mention that Ishii Momoko appears in scarcely any English language scholarship. While there may be many different reasons for this, one main reason is that she has only one notable work as an author of children’s books, Non-chan kumo ni noru, and is better known as a translator, and it is still rare, despite the rising interest in translation studies, to find scholarly works on translators in current English language scholarship especially in terms of children’s literature. This thesis shall attempt to analyze Ishii’s career in terms of the influences she had on the genre, situating it within the historic moments that she worked under, and outlining the processes and consequences of her role as an importer of culture.

22 For example, Kawahara Kazue, Kodomo-kan no kindai: “Akai tori” to ‘dōshin’ no risō (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron shinsha, 1998).
23 This does not mean that there has been no English language scholarship on Japanese translators of children’s literature. Translators such as Wakamatsu Shizuko and Muraoka Hanako have been written about by various scholars, while Ishii Momoko has hardly even been mentioned.
Beginning a Career During WWII

Ishii’s interest in children’s literature began in 1933 with a chance encounter with A. A. Milne’s *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928, translated by Ishii as *Pū yokochō ni tatta ie* and published by Iwanami Shoten in 1942). She found the book under a Christmas tree at the house of Inukai Takeru (1896-1960), the son of former Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi (1855-1932) and a politician himself. She had become close with Inukai’s family after working part-time organizing their family library and was invited to spend Christmas Eve with them. The book was a gift for Inukai’s two little children sent by a friend of the family, and translating the book on the spot at the request of the children was the beginning of what was to become a lifelong passion. Ishii states in an essay that she “entered into the work of editing and writing children’s books led by the hand of Pooh.”

Ishii entered the field of children’s literature at a time when the military regime began to have more and more influence on print culture as the war gradually escalated in scale. Ishii experienced firsthand the various changes that the genre underwent within such historical moments. In 1924 she entered the English literature program at Nihon Joshi Daigaku (Japan Women’s University), during which she gained proficiency in the English language and discovered the works of writers such as Willa Cather, who became a life-long favourite. Upon her graduation from Nihon Joshi Daigaku in 1928, she entered Bungeishunjūsha (founded in 1923 by Kikuchi Kan and home of the Akutagawa Prize) and began a career in editing. However, she did not work with children’s literature, editing magazines for adults such as *Fujin saron* (Ladies’ salon). In 1933, she left Bungeishunjūsha and entered Shinchōsha (a major house in literary fiction founded in 1896), where she began her first job of editing children’s books by becoming an editor of *Nihon shōkokumin bunko* (Japan little countrymen series). The 1930s was a time when children’s literature and other media for children began to be produced with propagandistic intentions. As the war in China escalated in the 30s, “[m]ilitarist ‘propaganda’—in the form of glorious tales of the exploits of war heroes both historical and contemporary—

became increasingly common,” while “[p]ublic media stressed that the nation was in hijōji—a time of crisis—and censorship of various sorts was tightened.”

One example of militarist propaganda was the many publications about the nikudan san’yūshi (the three courageous human bombs), which refers to three soldiers who participated in a suicide bombing in Shanghai in 1932. According to Yamanaka Hisashi, there were at least six children’s books about the nikudan san’yūshi published in March and April of 1932 alone. In addition to the books, there were “songs, monuments, newspaper and magazine encomiums...and textbook entries about [them and] other newly-minted heroes.”

The military regime only escalated its influence over children’s literature from this point, especially with the heightening of direct means of control beginning in the late 1930s.

In 1938, the Home Ministry of the Empire of Japan issued the “Jidō yomimono kaizen ni kansuru shiji yōkō (The outline of instructions for the improvement of reading material for children).” This document contained detailed regulations for editors, proclaiming the need for children's books to “contribute to the establishment of the Japanese spirit of piety, loyalty, filiality, servitude, honesty, modesty, courage, and affection.”

Torigoe notes, “while there have been many instances where the authority of a specific period intervened with children’s literature, this was the first time that it was put under a direct and complete supervision and control of [state] authority.”

As mentioned earlier, it was through this “shiji yōkō” that children’s literature was identified as shōkokumin bungaku, which was meant to reinforce the wartime notion that children should be educated and trained to be subjects who would sacrifice themselves for the emperor.

Although Ishii’s own comments on the militaristic atmosphere enveloping the publication industry during the war are rare, we can get a glimpse into her reaction in the following comment...
by Ibuse Masuji (1898-1993) in his afterword to his translation of Hugh Lofting’s *The Story of Dr. Dolittle* (1920):

> I learned of the stories of Dr. Dolittle in the spring of 1940, when the writer of children’s literature Ishii Momoko recommended it for me to read. At that time, the war in China was already fierce and even publishing was government regulated. Reading material for children were also becoming ultranationalist. Ishii was greatly pained by this and made a plan to start her own publishing company that published books that were truly for the children.\(^\text{30}\)

According to Ozaki Mariko, Ishii’s publishing company, Hakurin Shônenkan, began as part of a library for children in a storage house on the Inukai property that she started with two other acquaintances in 1938.\(^\text{31}\) Ibuse, an author of canonical status who won international acclaim with his novel *Kuroi ame* (*Black Rain*, 1966), was living in the same neighbourhood as Ishii near Ogikubo Station and was asked by Ishii to translate *The Story of Dr. Dolittle*,\(^\text{32}\) which was published by Hakurin Shônenkan in 1941 as *Doritoru-sensei Afurika yuki*. The only other book that was published by the company was Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows*, translated as *Tanoshii kawabe* (1940) by Nakano Yoshio, a translator of canonical English novels and later Professor of English at the University of Tokyo. Hakurin Shônenkan went out of business after publishing only these two books due to the beginning of the Pacific War and the shortage of paper. However, the attempt helped Ishii in discerning the direction of her career in children’s literature, and in retrospect, it serves as a precursor to Katsura Bunko and *Iwanami shônen bunko*. Knowing that she published translations of A. A. Milne’s Pooh books during this same period, we can identify her devotion to the promotion of English language children’s literature that drove her early career despite the nationalistic sentiments permeating the genre and the rising antagonism against English speaking countries.

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32 Ibid., 226-27.
The Creative Fellowship

Dower suggests that the “‘American interlude’ [meaning the Occupation] might have reinforced rather than altered tendencies within the defeated country.”33 This statement applies exceptionally well in Ishii’s case. Her dreams of running a children’s library and publishing translations of her favourite children’s books “vanished” and “became staggeringly lost” during the last years of the war.34 However, with the establishment of Nihon Jidō Bungakusha Kyōkai (Japan Children’s Literature Association) in 1946 that claimed its purpose as the “creation and distribution of free and artistic children’s literature for the construction of democracy,”35 she could resume the pursuit of those same dreams in a more facilitative social environment. She was hired by Iwanami in 1950 to be in charge of the founding of Iwanami shōnen bunko, which was a project that focused on translated children’s books from the outset. And in 1954, as mentioned earlier, she was given the opportunity to learn more about children’s libraries by receiving a Creative Fellowship from the Rockefeller Foundation, one of the many cultural exchange programs that were begun by both U.S. and Japan in the years following the end of the occupation. By taking part in this program, she not only gained support for her own work, but also became complicit in the political agendas that brought such programs into existence.

While the fellowship did not alter Ishii’s views and ideologies regarding children’s literature, it provided her with a more international perspective and the confidence of having seen first-hand the state of children’s literature in the U.S., Canada, and Britain. During the fellowship, she visited children’s libraries in San Francisco, Berkeley, San Diego, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, Cincinnati, New York, Boston, Toronto (Canada), Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Pittsburgh (in that order) and met many librarians, critics, and publishers working in children’s literature. Furthermore, she met with Bertha Mahoney Miller, Anne Carroll Moore (1871-1961) and Lillian H. Smith (1887-1983) who were all pioneers of children’s literature in America and

33 Dower, Embracing Defeat, 24.
34 Ishii, Ishii Momoko kōrekushon V Essei-shū, 57.
35 Quoted in Torigoe, Hajimete manabu Nihon jidō bungakushi, 296.
Canada. It is clear from her writings and contributions following the trip that she had internalized many of their ideas about children’s literature. Ishii wrote many essays in journals about literature or librarianship introducing people she met during her stay in the U.S. and their involvement in establishing children’s literature and libraries there. She also translated books written by them such as *The Unreluctant Years: A Critical Approach to Children’s Literature* (1953) by Smith, a Canadian librarian whom she met on her visit to Toronto. The translation of Smith’s book provided a way of thinking about children’s literature that deeply influenced parents, teachers, and librarians in Japan in the 60s and 70s. Ishii’s advocacy of their ideas had the effect of legitimizing American and Canadian children’s literature and libraries as a superior model to be imitated. This promotion of North American culture is likely the result that the Rockefeller Foundation desired, since the Creative Fellowship (as will be described below) was established under the influence of the American foreign policy during the Cold War, an aspect of which was to solidify democratic thought and build a positive image of the U.S. in Japan.

There has been a growing interest in recent scholarship about the political agendas behind American philanthropic programs, and a number of research on documents found in the Rockefeller Foundation archives that prove that the Creative Fellowship was deeply tied to the U.S. Cold War foreign policy. The Creative Fellowship ran from 1953 to 1962, inviting Japanese writers and literary critics to stay in the U.S. for up to a year. The person in charge of the program was Charles B. Fahs (1908-80), who was formerly the chief of the Far Eastern Division of the Office of Military Strategic Services during World War II. According to Ishii’s own account, Fahs was the one who interviewed her in Tokyo before deciding to award her the fellowship, and he was also part of planning where and whom she would visit while staying in

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America. A document that Fahs wrote in 1948 titled “Comments on Japan and suggestions for Rockefeller Foundation policy there” gives us a glimpse of the political intent behind the Creative Fellowship. Fahs states, “the failure of the occupation in matters of basic education may prove decisive in an orientation of Japan to the disadvantage of both the United States and the United Nations.” The document goes on to propose various actions that the foundation can take in order to help the “reorientation” of Japan, including the granting of “several more fellowships in librarianship.” Fahs was suggesting that interventions in librarianship would ultimately have political value in the effort to “keep Japan on our [the United States’] side.” Within these goals of a larger Cold War policy, Ishii’s knowledge of American children’s literature and her involvement in translated children’s literature must have made her a perfect candidate for the Creative Fellowship. The policy that drove the program ultimately served to “reinforce” and support her pre-existing tendencies.

Matsuda Takeshi suggests that many intellectuals in the 50s accepted such opportunities to travel to America in order to “study in the United States for lengthy periods of time and upon their return to Japan make constructive contributions to Japanese society.” This was also Ishii’s reason for accepting the Rockefeller fellowship. Ishii describes the process of accepting the fellowship in Jidō bungaku no tabi. During the latter half of 1953, when Ishii was preparing for the inauguration of a new picture book series Iwanami no kodomo no hon (Iwanami’s books for children), Sakanishi Shiho (1896-1976) visited her office at Iwanami to personally ask if she would be interested in studying abroad in America for a year. Sakanishi was the Japanese correspondent for the Creative Fellowship at the time and was in charge of recommending

39 Ishii, Jidō bungaku no tabi, 3.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
44 Ishii, Jidō bungaku no tabi, 2.
possible recipients to Fahs. Ishii recalls that she had already been considering taking a break from work to think things over because she had been having doubts about the state of children’s literature in Japan and her own work as an editor. She accepted the fellowship, feeling that seeing the world of children’s books in foreign countries would help her overcome those doubts. As Fahs states in the above-mentioned document, a major aim of the Rockefeller Foundation’s intercultural programs was the reorientation of Japan, and one could argue that by awarding Ishii with the Creative Fellowship the program succeeded in assisting the reorientation of Japanese children’s literature. This was made possible by the fact that Ishii’s aspirations were compliant with the objectives of the Rockefeller Foundation.

If the wartime children’s literature was infiltrated by blatant ultranationalism, the defining feature of postwar children’s literature was its de-nationalized and de-politicized façade. The political structures and intentions behind the Creative Fellowship were also hidden behind the veil of philanthropy. Upon hearing about the fellowship from Sakanishi, Ishii was concerned that she would be required to do something in return, to which Sakanishi assured her that there would be no such requirement and it would be sufficient if the things she learns could be used in her future career. The deal was that she could study in America for one year free of charge, with nothing to give back in return. However, this seemingly philanthropic aspect of the program was a deliberate political tactic of two powerful figures in U.S. foreign policy of the 50s. In 1951, U.S. President Harry S. Truman sent John Foster Dulles (chair of the board of trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1950 to 1952, and Secretary of State from 1953 to 1959) to Japan on a peace mission that “was widely perceived as an important preparatory step toward making peace with Japan and putting an end to the occupation.” Dulles also asked John D. Rockefeller III (who succeeded Dulles as the chair of the board of trustees of the Rockefeller Foundation in

46 Ibid.
47 Ibid., 2-3.
1952) to join him as a consultant on cultural affairs. It should be safe to assume that this peace mission had some relation to the beginning of the Creative Fellowship in 1953. Matsuda states,

[b]ecause occupied Japan was a crucial battle ground in the cultural cold war, Rockefeller exercised American soft power discreetly in postwar U.S.-Japan relations. He clearly recognized that the American strategy of employing soft power could be problematic—in a form that later would be called ‘cultural imperialism.’ But more than four decades would pass before historians and scholars of international relations…would pay attention to this controversial issue and popularize that notion in the early 1990s.49

In other words, although Rockefeller himself recognized the imperialistic ideologies behind the soft power strategy that he was employing, his discreet tactics allowed its problematic aspects to be hidden until the end of the Cold War in 1991. Contemporary Japanese children’s literature developed under such discreet political influence on culture, to which Ishii inadvertently played a significant role.

The political role that Ishii played in accepting the fellowship, travelling to America, and disseminating the knowledge she gained there after returning to Japan was not as simple as being coerced by a political power into taking specific actions, which was perhaps what would have been demanded of her prior to 1945. Consider Matsuda’s description of John D. Rockefeller III’s employment of soft power:

he astutely invented the idea of a “two-way street” when he envisioned U.S-Japan binational cultural programs, thereby avoiding the evils of the one-way imposition of culture by a powerful country on a weaker nation…Rockefeller’s ideas and behavior were far more sophisticated and complex than the concept of cultural imperialism. He practiced “cultural hegemony,” a notion that Italian political theorist Antonio Gramsci had crystallized in the last century. Hegemony could be defined as the capacity of a dominant power, through a combination of coercion and consent, to make other nations conform voluntarily to certain norms of behavior and act as the dominant country would

49 Ibid., 4-5.
like them to...Acculturation through cultural hegemony includes push and pull, wheeling and dealing, compromises, consensus, and, above all, generosity. The fact remains, however, that hegemony as a structure of dominance is sustained by broad-based consent through acceptance of an ideology associated with universalistic principles, though not in the absence of force.\textsuperscript{50}

Matsuda raises some useful terms for discussing the role of the Creative Fellowship within the overall cultural affairs during the Cold War, as well as the role that the fellowship ascribed unto Ishii Momoko. The reason that the term “hegemony” is more fitting than “imperialism” is because the tactic of U.S. cultural policy was to discreetly induce the Japanese to act as the U.S. would like them to, namely to embrace the American model of democracy and hold positive views toward America.

Matsuda describes the hegemonic structure of dominance as an “acceptance of an ideology associated with universalistic principles.”\textsuperscript{51} This description fits very well with Ishii and children’s literature because the kind of children’s literature that Ishii advocated, which valued pleasure, simple language, and the child’s point of view, was founded upon the belief in universal qualities of superior books for children. Her ideas about the universal qualities of the child, what children want to read, and what children should be given to read were sought and found during her one year stay in America and also through further correspondence with the people she met there in the following years. Her goal was not to give Japanese children’s literature “American” traits, but to “think about the thing called the world”\textsuperscript{52} through what she learned there. In disseminating her newly acquired knowledge back in Japan, she presented Japanese children’s literature as a deviation from the norm, as going against the “world standard.”\textsuperscript{53} Although she used the term “world,” discussing the universal qualities of what

\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 5.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{52} Ishii, Jidō bungaku no tabi, iv.

\textsuperscript{53} Ishii Momoko, Inui Tomiko, Suzuki Shin’ichi, Seta Teiji, Matsui Tadashi, and Watanabe Shigeo, Kodomo to bungaku (Tokyo: Fukuinkan Shoten, 1993), i-ii.
children’s literature should be, she had only visited the countries for which the Rockefeller Foundation provided funding: U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy. Of these countries, Ishii states that she did not see any public libraries in France, Germany, and Italy, and her trip to Europe “was more like a sight-seeing trip.” The state of children’s literature that she was exposed to during the entire trip was limited to that of America, Canada, and Britain. However, by presenting what she saw as universal truths about the world, she promoted an acceptance and normalization of the ideas from those countries, ultimately participating in implanting the structures of Rockefeller’s cultural hegemony within the discourse surrounding children’s literature.

The Structures of Influence

This thesis focuses on the ideas about children’s literature that originate in English speaking cultures, mainly the U.S., Canada, and Britain, which were accepted as universal standards in Japan during the 50s and 60s and set the overall direction for the development of contemporary Japanese children’s literature. Through an analysis of Ishii’s involvement in the field during this period, we may begin to gain an understanding of the process of how the genre internalized the imported ideas as it took shape within the historical conditions of postwar Japan. Chapter 1 deals with Ishii’s use of the ideas in Smith’s book The Unreluctant Years to criticize prewar Japanese children’s literature in her co-authored book, Kodomo to bungaku (Children and literature, 1960). Ishii and the other authors of the book analyze prominent works of prewar dōwa with the standards of “good” children’s literature that Smith explicates. The arguments in Kodomo to bungaku are representative of the discourse through which contemporary Japanese literature came to be defined. Chapter 2 focuses on Ishii’s work in translation, especially the editing of Iwanami shōnen bunko. Her insistence on complete and faithful translations and reliance on American lists of books for children helped shape a new culture of translation that also had a significant influence on the writing of original children’s literature in Japan. Chapter 3 follows the process of establishing children’s libraries in Japan. Ishii mimicked the steps that Miller and

54 Ishii, Jidō bungaku no tabi, 50.
Moore took in the early twentieth century by running her own private library for children and generating a discourse that recognizes the importance of public library space for children’s books. The influence that these contributions had in the development of contemporary children’s literature is immense, as is the influence that the political conditions of postwar Japan had on Ishii’s career. The following chapters are an attempt to understand the long-lasting effects and question the consequences of those postwar structures of influence.
Chapter 1
The Structures of Disavowal in *Kodomo to bungaku*

The World Standard of Children’s Literature

The direction that Ishii indicated for the future of children’s literature in postwar Japan was not to build upon the existing domestic tradition, but rather to replace the tradition that she believed to be an “upside-down effort [sakadachi no doryoku]“\(^{55}\) that was deviant from the “world standard of children’s literature.”\(^{56}\) In other words, the construction of contemporary Japanese children’s literature was also a demolition of what came before—it's becoming an un-becoming. As an example of the discourse through which arguments against prewar children’s stories developed, this chapter will focus on *Kodomo to bungaku*, which was as influential as it was controversial in formulating tangible criticisms of prewar Japanese children’s literature and outlining the standards of an appropriate literature for children. In generating the argument, the book begins with a sharp criticism of Ogawa Mimei, the most prominent writer of the prewar *dōwa*, analyzing his works and ideologies regarding children’s literature based almost entirely on ideas that can be found in Lillian Smith’s *The Unreluctant Years*. Utilizing standards found in a foreign text to analyze important Japanese works is one example of the process through which the domestic Japanese tradition was replaced by a foreign Anglophone one. In detailing this process, which was both progressive and dismissive, it is important to consider what was gained as well as what was lost. The uniqueness of a domestic literary tradition, for one, was one such loss.

*Kodomo to bungaku* was co-authored by six important figures in postwar children’s literature, including Ishii, which suggests that the ideas in the book was representative of a general trend at the time rather than a singularity. Soon after returning to Japan in 1955, Ishii began a study group with Inui Tomiko (writer of children’s literature and another editor of *Iwanami shōnen*...
bunko), Suzuki Shin’ichi (editor at Heibonsha, a publisher with a strong focus on scholarly, educational, and encyclopedic books founded in 1914), Seto Teiji (writer, translator, and critic of children's literature) and Matsui Tadashi (editor and co-founder of Fukuinkan Shoten, a prominent publisher of children’s books founded in 1952). Later on, Watanabe Shigeo (librarian, writer, translator of children's literature) joined the group and the six of them met regularly until 1960 when they co-authored *Kodomo to bungaku* as a report of what they had learned through the discussions. One of their main goals was to gain a better understanding of “how the so called modern Japanese children’s literature, from the end of Meiji to the present [1950s Japan], is being accepted by the children of today, and whether it is suitable for the raising of children.”57

Their method was “to read carefully, line by line, a number of works by writers who are said to have left significant footprints in Japanese children’s literature” and discussing each member’s opinions.58 They read works of six writers: Ogawa Mimei, Hamada Hirosuke (1893-1973), Tsubota Jōji (1890-1982), Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933), Chiba Shōzō (1892-1975), and Niimi Nankichi (1913-1943). Although in the foreword, the authors acknowledge that they did not look at a great number of writers’ works and did not conduct rigorous research, specifically stating that the book “is not a conclusion about ‘this is what Japanese children’s literature was like, this is how it should be,’”59 the frequent usage of the term “Japanese children’s literature” as well as the fact that Part 1 (which occupies 3/4 of the book) is titled “Looking back at Japan’s children’s literature” paints an image to the reader that the purpose of the book is to discuss the entirety of a Japan specific tradition of children’s literature.

The awareness of an identity of Japanese children’s literature as opposed to a foreign or “world” children’s literature is laid out shortly after the beginning of the foreword:

> When the group began, one member of the group, Ishii, had just returned to Japan after studying abroad in order to see the state of children’s book publishing and children’s library services in the United States and Britain. However, after returning to Japan and

57 Ibid., ii.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., iii.
confronting what is called Japan’s children’s literature, she found that it was even harder than before to organize her own thoughts.

Within the children’s literature of the world, Japan’s children’s literature is definitely a singular and unusual one. The world standard of children’s literature that literature for children should be pleasurable and easy to understand does not apply here. Also, criticism of children’s literature in Japan is abstract and based on impressions and sensibilities, making it difficult to understand.⁶⁰

It is evident from this passage that the study group was initiated by Ishii’s experience in America and that a need for the reevaluation of Japanese children’s literature arose from an awareness of the trends in foreign children’s literature. By presenting Japanese children’s literature as “singular” in comparison with the “children's literature of the world” and “world standard,” they portray an image of a universal standard, as though there exists such a thing as one correct way of writing for children. The rest of the book reflects this belief in universal standards as well, categorizing and qualifying each of the works they analyze as being good or bad children's literature, “good” as meeting the world standard which was based predominantly on the standard of Anglophone children’s literature imported from U.S., Britain, and Canada.

As mentioned earlier, the standards utilized in Kodomo to bungaku was largely based on Smith’s book, The Unreluctant Years, which was initially published in the U.S. by the American Library Association and translated to Japanese as Jidō bungaku ron in 1964 by three of the authors of Kodomo to bungaku: Ishii, Seta, and Watanabe. The afterword to the translated version describes a time during the study group meeting when “all three translators recommended Lillian Smith’s book at once, during a discussion of what book could provide the guidance required” for their study of children’s literature.⁶¹ How Seta and Watanabe had first encountered the book is not mentioned. However, according to Kanayama Aiko, Seta had found a book list by Anne Carroll Moore in Compton’s Pictured Encyclopedia, an American encyclopedia for children, in 1949.

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⁶⁰ Ibid., i-ii.

while searching through American encyclopedias at the National Diet Library in preparation for the publication of a children’s encyclopedia for Heibonsha called *Jidō hyakka jiten* (Children’s encyclopedia). It is probable that he found Smith’s books through a similar route. Watanabe was awarded a Fulbright scholarship in 1954 to study librarianship at the graduate school at the Western Reserve University in Ohio. Afterwards, he worked at the children’s section of the New York Public Library from 1955 to 1957. It is likely that he would have read Smith’s book during this period. The routes through which the three translators possibly gained access to Smith’s book are closely tied to the involvement of the U.S. in Japan since the end of World War II. The National Diet Library was established in 1948 under the counsel of an American delegate dispatched by the General Headquarters, or the Supreme Commander for the Allied Occupation (commonly represented as GHQ/SCAP), and as explained earlier, the Creative Fellowship and the Fulbright Program were part of American Cold War policy that promoted cultural exchange between U.S. and Japan. The influence of Smith’s book on the authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* is representative of the American influence on a larger scale that the culture of *haisenkoku* Japan was subject to.

### The Approach and Its Problems

*Kodomo to bungaku* not only utilizes Smith’s ideas on stories for children, but also internalizes ideologies regarding literature and children themselves. An analysis of what those ideologies vouched for as well as against will provide insight into what was gained and lost through this approach. In the afterword to *Jidō bungaku ron*, Ishii, Seta, and Watanabe describe the purpose of their study group as “returning Japanese children’s literature to the hands of children while creating something that can be considered literature.” Although they do not define what they mean by “literature” in this afterword, Smith’s insistence that “identical artistic standards prevail

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in both children’s and adult literature,”\textsuperscript{64} may have influenced their statement. While Smith’s own definition of literature is obscure, she does mention that a part of the enjoyment of literature is “a pleasure in the order and beauty of words, in the art of writing, that is similar to listening to music or looking at a picture.”\textsuperscript{65} It is evident that Smith viewed literature as a form of art that has its purpose in pleasure. The following quote illustrates a main point from Smith’s book that no doubt influenced Ishii’s view of children’s literature and is perhaps a defining ideology behind contemporary Japanese children’s literature:

Writing for children is an art and should be approached as such. In this discussion of children’s books the emphasis will be on books as literature, as an end in themselves, and not as tools serving a secondary purpose, however worthy. To regard children’s books in this way, to ask that they make to a child’s growth, intellectual and spiritual, a contribution of permanent value, is not to lay an undue weight upon a subject that should be a lighthearted and happy one.\textsuperscript{66}

It is clear that Smith prioritizes artistry, form, and the enjoyment that the reader receives from it over the content, message, and learning. One trend that can be seen in postwar Japan is a sharp criticism of pedagogic aspects in children’s stories. Ishii, Seta, and Watanabe’s notion of “returning Japanese children’s literature to the hands of children” can likely be equated to not imposing adult ideas about what children ought to learn, or be for that matter. However, this could also mean that children’s literature is taken out of the hands of adults. In other words, the function of children’s literature as a tool for moral and ethical education is undermined, denying adults access to an effective means of guiding the future generation. This gives rise to the question whether the art of conveying a message or teaching through art is “low art,” if it indeed is “art” at all.

The pursuit of a non-pedagogic children’s literature that does not impose adult ideas poses a


\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid., 17.
paradox. Even when writing for the enjoyment of the child, the writer needs to have his or her own ideas about what children enjoy, which is inevitably based on the writer’s image of what a child is—their concept of the child. Since all adults were once children, adult writers can be expected to have an understanding of what it is like to be a child as well as memories of what they themselves enjoyed as children. However, an adult’s understanding of childhood is retrospective, meaning that the image of their own childhood emerges as an adult looking back at the past, categorizing and characterizing the earlier years of their life under a category of “childhood.” It is this category and its definition that becomes expressed through the writing of stories for children. For this reason, it is especially necessary for authors of children’s literature to have clear-cut notions of childhood, which is ultimately imposed on the child reader even if the story is not directly stating the lesson to be learned.

Since the notions of childhood that are inherent in the arguments of Kodomo to bungaku are guided by Smith’s book, they are not only adult notions but also those arising from a different historical context. Smith’s image of childhood is clearly identified in the following passage:

There are those who think of a child’s book as just a simpler treatment of an adult theme. This point of view considers children only as diminutive adults and arises from a misunderstanding of childhood itself. For children are a race whose experience of life is different from that of adults. Theirs is a different world—a child’s world in which values are expressed in children’s terms and not in those which belong to adult experience.67

This notion that children are a different “race” (translated as jinshu in the Japanese version) that has different ways of expression was an important idea that Ishii’s study group took from the book, which provided solid ground for their criticism of prewar children’s literature by providing the concept of the child as an objective being with universal traits. Smith did not differentiate children of different races but only differentiated children from adults, grouping all children of the world into one “race” called “the child.” This is quite a different concept of the child from the idea of the shōkokumin (the little countrymen), which was often used in prewar Japan to refer to children. The identity of shōkokumin was based heavily on nationality, as future citizens of

67 Ibid., 14.
Japan, but Smith’s notion of the child as being one race erases national identities. By using Smith’s ideas, Ishii and the other authors neglected to pay attention to the Japaneseness of Japanese children, ignoring their specific circumstances, traditions, and individual identities, which ultimately led to an erasure of the uniqueness of children’s literature in Japan, molding it into a normalized identity of a universal children’s literature, imposing upon Japanese children the image of the ‘universal child.’

Smith describes childhood as “the years of wonder” and discusses the “natural instinct of a child toward beauty and imagination,” arguing that books for children must have qualities that appeal to the tastes of children and that works that she calls “the classics” exemplify those qualities. She states, “[t]he development and use of a personal yardstick gained from and based on the classics of children’s literature, if applied to any newly published book, will help us to recognize those books which share, in varying degrees, the ingredients of the books which have shown enduring qualities.” However, what she presents as “the classics of children's literature” are limited to works written in North America and Europe. In Chapter Two, titled “The lineage of children’s literature,” she begins an account of the history of children’s literature with the printing of *Reynard the Fox* (1481) and *The Fables of Aesop* (1484) by the first English printer, William Caxton. She then paints a picture of development in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries by mentioning John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* (1678), Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726), and the fairy tales of Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen. The prominent writers of the latter half of the nineteenth century that she lists include Nathaniel Hawthorne, Charles Kingsley, Lewis Carroll, Louisa May Alcott, Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Rudyard Kipling. This history is not qualified as either English or Western children’s literature nor are the readers of the mentioned works qualified in any way. However, the authors she mentions wrote in English with the exception of Perrault, Grimm, and Andersen. Furthermore, statements such as “it was not until Mary Howitt translated Hans Andersen’s fairy tales that children’s literature

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68 Ibid., 22.
69 Ibid., 34.
70 Ibid., 21.
was once more enriched by a work of genius,”\textsuperscript{71} illustrates a view that for non-English works, their translations in English are essential to their canonization, making it clear that she is viewing the history from an Anglophone perspective. She also suggests, “[t]he children of England and America have always shared a common heritage of literature,”\textsuperscript{72} which indicates that her focus is on the culture shared by the two English speaking countries.

Despite her apparent region and culture specific point of view, Smith’s presented “children’s literature” without the qualifier ‘English,’ which becomes even more problematic when that same presentation is utilized in \textit{Kodomo to bungaku}. In addition to using the term “world,” generalizations about “foreign” children’s literature pervade the arguments in the book. For example, a description of three British writers, Lewis Carroll, A. A. Milne, and Helen Bannerman, about how they verbally told their stories to children before writing them down is followed by this statement: “modern children’s literature in foreign countries had an admirable beginning, which was guided by the actual imagination of children and their child-like sensibilities, entering together into the world of fantasy.”\textsuperscript{73} Although the writers themselves are identified as British, the application of their characteristics to a general “foreign” tendency falsely reinforces the notion that the tradition in Japanese children’s literature are a deviation from the norm. Immediately following the above passage, modern children’s literature in Japan is described as being intended for adults rather than children.\textsuperscript{74} This generates a binary view of Japan versus world, obscuring the specificity of the Anglophone cultures being discussed. Even as the works of prewar Japanese children’s literature are compared to works by writers such as Hans Christian Andersen, Eleanor Farjeon, Lewis Carroll, Marjorie Flack, and O. Henry, of whom only Andersen is not Anglophone, the phrase “foreign children’s literature” is constantly used to describe their characteristics.

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 27.
\textsuperscript{72} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{73} Ishii et al., \textit{Kodomo to bungaku}, 26.
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid.
Comparing Japan against Anglophone-centered standards had a similar effect as painting an Orientalist view of Japan's culture, which led to a kind of “othering” of prewar Japanese children’s literature. Edward Said states that “Orientalism is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident.’” In making the distinction between “foreign” and Japanese children’s literature and by attributing universal characteristics to the former and singular characteristics to the latter, Ishii and others participated in an Orientalist differentiation of Japan not necessarily from the Occident but from an image of the “foreign” derived from American and British cultures. Said further describes Orientalism “as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.” When we look at *Kodomo to bungaku*, as well as much of Ishii’s career, similar authorizations, descriptions, teachings, settlements, rulings are made about Japanese children’s literature, all with respect to an overarching structure of a dominant and authoritative foreign model. The authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* treated their own culture under the same structure of knowledge and power as Orientalism and made suggestions for a future of Japanese children’s literature that resembled that of the Anglophone West.

**Mimei vs. Andersen and Farjeon**

As mentioned earlier, *Kodomo to bungaku* is divided into two parts: Part 1, which analyzes the works of the writers, and Part 2, which is a general discussion of children’s literature. Each chapter in Part 1 is dedicated to each writer, and the works of the writers discussed in the first three chapters, Ogawa Mimei, Hamada Hirosuke, and Tsubota Jōji, are criticized as adult centered and inappropriate as literature for children, while the works of the last three, Miyazawa Kenji, Chiba Shōzō, and Niimi Nankichi, are acknowledged as exemplifying good qualities of children’s literature. Although each author of *Kodomo to bungaku* was in charge of writing

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76 Ibid., 3.
different parts of the book, the content is presented as a summary of the group’s thoughts using the first person plural pronoun *watashitachi*. The use of *watashitachi* presents a collective yet subjective point of view, which identifies the criticisms as not personal biases but logical conclusions that were agreed upon by a group, functioning as a kind of legitimation for what is being said.

Despite the acknowledgement in the foreword quoted earlier that *Kodomo to bungaku* was not intended to be a conclusion of what Japanese children’s literature had been and should be, the book includes some bold statements about the six writers that are discussed. The most notable and discussed part of the book is the criticism Ogawa Mimei, a key figure in establishing the *dōwa* tradition along with Suzuki Miekichi (1882-1936), the founder and editor of *Akai tori*.

Mimei\(^{77}\) was one of the most influential and respected names in prewar children's literature and to criticize not only his work but his legitimacy as a writer of children’s literature was quite controversial. The recognition of the importance of Mimei’s position in Japanese children’s literature is evident in a passage from the first chapter of *Kodomo to bungaku* that argues, “modern children’s literature in Japan was formed by the intense burning [hageshii nenshō] of the child’s heart [dōshin] of one writer,”\(^{78}\) which attributes the formation of not only *dōwa* but modern Japanese children’s literature to one single writer, Mimei (and to his romantic ideology of the child’s heart, which will be discussed further on). To criticize Mimei was to criticize the entire genre, and the arguments in *Kodomo to bungaku* were presented as such.

Until the postwar era, Mimei’s works had been included in textbooks and also received many awards, giving him the name of “the father of *dōwa*.”\(^{79}\) He began his career as a novelist of the romanticist tradition and only began writing stories for children in the middle of his career, ultimately converting fully into a writer of children’s literature. In 1910, he published his first collection of children’s stories, *Akai fune* (The red ship), which some consider the starting point of modern Japanese children's literature, and after Suzuki Miekichi began *Akai tori* in 1918, he

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\(^{77}\) Ogawa Mimei is referred to by his given name Mimei, to be consistent with conventions in Japan.

\(^{78}\) Ishii et al., *Kodomo to bungaku*, 26.

\(^{79}\) Ibid., 3.
became one of the main contributors to the monthly magazine. *Akai tori* was a significant turning point for children’s literature in Japan, publishing stories by some of the most prominent literary figures of the time such as Shimazaki Tōson, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Izumi Kyōka, and Kitahara Hakushū, and elevating children's stories in terms of literary and artistic value. The magazine was grounded in *dōshin shugi* (principle of the child’s heart), which idealized children as pure and innocent.  

Mimei's work also derived from this focus on the child's heart, but the question that was raised by postwar critics was exactly where this child’s heart resided, within the child or within the adult (as an expression of a nostalgic past). It is this positioning of the child within the literary work that was evaluated in terms of Smith’s ideas.

The structure of Japanese versus foreign children’s literature is immediately evident in the beginning of the first chapter of *Kodomo to bungaku* when one of Mimei’s most famous stories, “Akai rōsoku to ningyo (Red candles and the mermaid),” is compared with Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid” and Eleanor Farjeon’s “The Goldfish.” No justification is given as to why Andersen and Farjeon’s works were chosen for comparison other than the fact that they begin with descriptions of living in the sea. Considering that the purpose of the book is to rethink children’s literature at a national level, it may be understandable that foreign works would be used for comparison. However, there is no acknowledgement that the stories were written under different conventions, only focusing on technical differences of style. Another way of thinking about these comparisons is that because the canonical status of Mimei’s story within Japan is such that it could be a standard of its own, comparison with foreign works was the only way to undermine that domestic status. The fact that both Andersen and Farjeon’s works are praised for their efficiency of style and Mimei’s criticized for its confusing nature, as will be discussed further, sets up a dynamic that favours the style of foreign works over Japanese. It

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80 Ibid., 12.

81 “The Little Mermaid” was first translated to Japanese in 1904 by Takasu Baikei as “Ningyo monogatari” and published in *Shinchō*. Andersen’s works were first translated to Japanese in 1886 and many of his stories were translated numerous times. His canonical status in children’s literature was already well established in Japan at the time of *Kodomo to bungaku*’s publication.

82 “The Goldfish” is included in Farjeon’s collection of short stories, *The Little Bookroom*, which was translated to Japanese by Ishii Momoko with the title *Mugi to ōsama* and published as part of Iwanami Shōnen Bunko in 1959 (the first translation of Farjeon’s work into Japanese).
inevitably becomes an argument for the reshaping of Japanese children’s literature after the model of foreign children’s literature, which reflects the state of haisenkoku Japan as it was being reshaped into a democratic nation, specifically in terms of policies regarding children that were mostly based on Anglophone models. It was a time when both the standards of society and standards of literature were being imported.

The analysis of Mimei’s story begins with this impression that the authors received from the story: “this story showed confusion in terms of image, description, and tense. Especially in the beginning, we could not see a clear element that would develop into a story. For two to three pages, descriptions of one mermaid and the scenery are disorderly repeated.” This passage is followed by a quotation of the actual beginning sentences of Mimei’s story. By presenting the work in this way, the book gives the reader a set standard by which to evaluate the story even before reading the excerpt. It is evident that the standards are largely influenced by Anglophone ones, not only from the fact that Andersen (canonized in Anglophone children’s literature since being translated to English) and Farjeon’s works are being used for comparison, but also from the use of the English word “tense,” which is written in katakana (テンス) with the character for time (時) in brackets to let the reader know that it refers to time. The presentation of the word “tense” is itself an indication that it was a term not in common use. The use of “tense” as an evaluation tool for a Japanese language text requires more explanation than the authors of Kodomo to bungaku provide, since “tense” functions very differently in Japanese as it does in English. Consider Yoko Hasegawa’s description:

With regard to tense, English makes a three-way distinction (past–present–future), while Japanese makes a two-way distinction (past vs. non-past) …Japanese has two verbal suffixes, -ta/-da (e.g. hanashi-ta ‘talked’, non-da ‘drank’, tabe-ta ‘ate’) and -u/-ru, collectively as -ru, (e.g. nom-u ‘drink’, tabe-ru ‘eat’). The former is referred to as the past tense form, and the latter as the non-past tense form.  

83 Ishii et al., Kodomo to bungaku, 4.
According to Matsuo Soga, “[t]he two-way contrast of past and non-past in Japanese necessarily neutralizes the contrast between the present and the future, which exists in some languages. Therefore, it may often lead to ambiguities with respect to whether or not a -ru form refers to the present or the future.” Narratives written in the Japanese language may seem ambiguous when compared to English, which is able to define the present and the future more clearly.

Furthermore, “[t]a and -ru frequently alternate in written as well as spoken discourse,” which may be what the authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* describe as a confusion of tense. Soga suggests that “[t]he alternation…is a stylistic matter, not a grammatical one” and the “proper uses of tense forms constitute an element of the effective specific style of an author or of a story.”

The use of tense forms in Japanese differs grammatically and stylistically from that of English, and to criticize the inconsistency of tenses in Japanese writing is to force the standards of English language onto another language.

The beginning of “Akai rōsoku to ningyo” goes like this:

Mermaids do not all live in the seas of the west. They also live in the seas of the north.

The colour of the northern seas were blue. One day, a female mermaid went up on a boulder and rested as she looked around at the scenery.

The lonesome moonlight spilling from between the clouds shone on the waves. No matter where she looked, great waves endlessly writhed about.

It goes on to describe that the mermaid has heard of the human world where it is less lonely and decides to give her soon to be born baby to humans. She sees a shrine on top of a small mountain.

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87 Soga, *Tense and Aspect in Modern Colloquial Japanese*, 219.
88 Ogawa Mimei, *Ogawa Mimei dōwashū* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1951), 7, quoted in Ishii et al., *Kodomo to bungaku*, 5. No changes have been made other than the use of furigana (small syllabic characters printed beside Chinese characters to give their reading).
and heads toward it to leave her baby there. This beginning is criticized in *Kodomo to bungaku* as not describing a clear image of the mermaid being introduced, not explaining how the mermaid had heard of humans, and not showing the details of the lonely life of the mermaid while only giving a feeling of loneliness and darkness.\(^{89}\) The criticism continues, “the more fantastical the story is the more rigid structure is needed, but here, there is no setting that takes the unreal world and presents it to the reader realistically.”\(^ {90}\) The basis for all of the arguments made here can be found in Smith’s book. Talking about the beginning of fairy tales, Smith praises “[h]ow tersely the setting is given for the tale that is to be told, yet how clearly, so that in two or three opening sentences we have before us the chief characters, the place, and the situation from which the action of the story must proceed.”\(^ {91}\) This is clearly the standard for a good opening to a children’s story that Ishii and others were looking for, not the expression of mood, atmosphere, and emotion that perhaps Mimei was more focused on.

It seems as if Smith’s ideas were accepted without question and applied word for word in evaluating Mimei's work. Talking about Kenneth Grahame’s *The Wind in the Willows* (1908, which Ishii translated in 1950\(^ {92}\)) Smith finds a high degree of quality “in the integrity with which he gives verisimilitude and reality to the unreal world of fantasy.”\(^ {93}\) Smith also emphasizes in various parts of the book about the importance of logic and rationality inherent to the world of the story. The authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* find these exact qualities in the opening of Andersen’s “The Little Mermaid,” which is also quoted and analyzed.

Far out at sea, the water is as blue as the petals of the prettiest cornflowers and as clear as the purest glass. But it’s very deep out there, so deep that even the longest anchor line

\(^{89}\) Ishii et al., *Kodomo to bungaku*, 6.

\(^{90}\) Ibid.

\(^{91}\) Smith, *The Unreluctant Years*, 57.

\(^{92}\) Published through Eihōsha as *Hikigaeru no bōken* in 1950, then in 1963, it was published by Iwanami Shoten under a new title *Tanoshibi kawabe: Hikigaeru no bōken*. In 2002, an Iwanami Shōnen Bunko version was published under the title *Tanoshibi kawabe*.

\(^{93}\) Smith, *The Unreluctant Years*, 162.
can’t touch bottom. You would have to pile up countless church steeples, one on top of
the other, to get from the bottom of the sea all the way up to the surface. The sea people
live down there.  

They claim that this opening describes a realistic deep sea as a place where sea people might
actually live, in contrast to a sea that is projected in the mind as only a mood or atmosphere.  
They further state that a good explanation of the reason why the sea people know of the human
world, along with the explanation that mermaid princesses are allowed to go to see the world of
humans when they are fifteen, would give a clear understanding of the setting for the story. In
contrast to this, they argue that, in Mimei’s opening, it is difficult to picture what the mermaid
looks like, although the language is able to portray a “tremendous [monosugoi] atmosphere.” If
we flip this assessment around, it could be said that Mimei’s opening generates a stronger feeling
of atmosphere than Andersen’s. While the opening of “The Little Mermaid” gives a lengthy
description of the colour blue and compares the depth of the sea to two tangible objects, guiding
the reader in painting an image of the setting in their mind through logical and even scientific
means, it does not provide the kind of emotional impact as Mimei’s “lonesome moonlight” or the
endlessly writhing waves. The arguments in Kodomo to bungaku are selective in using one
narrow standard in comparing the two stories, placing higher value on qualities advocated by
Smith and focusing only on those qualities such as realistic and clear descriptions.

The passages and characteristics chosen for comparison accentuate the difference between
Andersen and Mimei. However, the number of examples are limited and they are unable to paint
a comprehensive picture of how the works of the two writers differ. Mimei was a prolific writer

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94 Hans Christian Andersen, Anderusen dōwa sen 1, trans. Ōhata Suekichi (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1953), 292,
quoted in Ishii et al., Kodomo to bungaku, 6. The English translation in my text is quoted from Hans Christian
Andersen, “The Little Mermaid,” in The Annotated Has Christian Andersen, ed. Maria Tatar, trans. Maria Tatar and
Julie K. Allen (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008), 120. The Ōhata Suekichi translation was published as
part of Iwanami shōnen bunko.
95 Ishii et al., Kodomo to bungaku, 7.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid., 5-6.
and his stories naturally vary in style. For example, another of his best-known stories “Nobara (The wild rose)” begins like this:

A big country and a country a bit smaller than that were side by side. At the time, there were no ill will between the two countries and it was peaceful.

This place is at the border, which is far from the city. There was only one soldier from each country who were sent to protect the stone monument that marked the border. The soldier from the big country was an old man. And the soldier from the small country was a young man.

This opening clearly introduces the setting, characters, and situation in the terse manner that Smith describes, which does not align with the assessment of Mimei’s style by the authors of Kodomo to bungaku. The authors state that they read a number of works by Mimei after reading “Akai rōsoku to ningyo,” but no other story is quoted nor even named (except for one very short story written for younger children “Nandemo arimasu (It has everything)” briefly discussed at the end of the chapter). The absence of examples from other works for comparison paints a partial image of Mimei’s writing, and through constant reminder of his influence to the genre in Japan, a partial image of Japanese children’s literature.

We can find further evidence of the selectiveness of the examples given in Kodomo to bungaku in the quote from the opening of Farjeon’s “The Goldfish,” which is also given in comparison.

There was once a Goldfish who lived in the sea in the days when all fishes lived there. He was perfectly happy, and had only one care; and that was to avoid the net that floated about in the water, now here, now there. (…) So the Goldfish enjoyed a glorious life, swimming for days and days in the blue and green water.

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One sentence is omitted in the quotation in *Kodomo to bungaku* and indicated with the word *chūryaku* in brackets, in the place of the ellipsis in the above quote. The omitted sentence is, “But all the fish had been warned by King Neptune, their father, to avoid the net, and in those days they did as they were bid,” and it is included in the original Japanese translation from which the quotation is made. The omission is clearly a manipulation of the example to fit their argument, which is problematic as the effectiveness of the opening sentences cannot be compared fairly without the full quotation. The final sentence in the quotation is also only the beginning portion of a much longer sentence that is ten lines long in the original English version. Since the authors’ comment on this opening is, “we think that this simple opening that has not one unnecessary aspect is actually [kosō, marking a contrast with Mimei] a beautiful example of an opening for a ‘modern children’s story [kindai dōwa],’” it is questionable why a full sentence and the majority of the last sentence had to be cut out. The authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* seem to be imposing their ideas onto the stories rather than judging the works themselves. Furthermore, instead of explicating the definition of a “modern children’s story,” the term is simply equated with Farjeon’s style, while implying that works of Mimei, the father of modern Japanese children’s literature, are not truly modern. Mimei is forced into a losing battle that is fought according to the rules of the opposition.

**Differing Concepts of the Child**

The criticism of Mimei did not stop at the analysis of his writing. The authors of *Kodomo to bungaku* question his ideologies regarding literature, especially his awareness of children as the readership for his works. The arguments are telling of the authors’ own ideologies about the child reader, which were evidently influenced by Smith. Furthermore, it is possible that their stance toward childhood was a reaction to the *shōkokumin* culture, arising from a desire to free children from the hands of the adults who had once taught them that dying in war for the emperor was honorable. Mimei’s involvement in the *shōkokumin bungaku* period during war

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100 Farjeon, The Little Bookroom, 40.

101 Ishii et al., Kodomo to bungaku, 8.
including his participation in writing the “Jidō yomimono kaizen ni kansuru shiji yōkō” by the Home Ministry\(^{102}\) may have played a part in the authors’ attempt to find fault with his ideologies, as part of the attempt to find fault with the culture of children’s literature under the imperial regime. Whether this is true or not, much of their criticism seems subjective and biased, not only against Mimei, but the tradition that they insist as embodying his ideologies.

The discussion of Mimei’s ideologies center around and article that he published in the *Tokyō nichinichi shinbun* in 1926, in which he declared that he would devote the rest of his career to the writing of children’s stories (*dōwa*). Here is a part of the declaration that was under most scrutiny by the authors of *Kodomo to bungaku*:

> It is not sufficient for my *dōwa* to simply give children a feeling of enjoyment. Also, it is not enough [for my *dōwa*] to be just a fable. It comes from a heart that yearns to search for beauty in all different things within a grand world, and also the wish to express through poesy the kind of unity that the beauty needs to reside in for it to be a proper existence.

> In that regard, the *dōwa* that I have been writing can be said to have a slightly different stance than the usual *dōwa* or the *dōwa* as it is understood nowadays. It may be apparent that there are parts that take on more meaning when read by adults. However, because it is grounded on the child's heart, and because *dōwa* must grow in a world of fantasy, not the world that the adults see, it is right to call it *dōwa*.\(^{103}\)

The authors analyze in depth the contents of this declaration, mainly in terms of the location of the child within Mimei’s literature. Especially the part where Mimei states that the stories will be better understood by adults is taken up and characterized as being representative of how the “major writers of Japan…worked extra hard to drive out the ever-important child from

\(^{102}\) For details of his involvement, see Yamanaka, *Shōkokumin sensō bunkashi*, 82-86.

‘children’s literature.’”104 The discussion is essentially an argument involving different concepts of the child, but the authors do not acknowledge this. They have a view of a universal child (what they call a “living child” or “ikita kodomo”105) that is not a subjective idea within the adult’s mind and treat the matter as if the objective existence of the universal child is self-evident. They read Mimei’s declaration with firmly set ideas of what children are and what the relationship between children’s literature and children should be.

Mimei’s reason for becoming exclusively a children’s story writer, according to authors of Kodomo to bungaku, was not unrelated to the change in his political stance at this time. The authors state, “The reason Mimei, who was a romanticist and an idealist, was moved by the waves of the time in choosing to become a socialist was mainly because of the passion and humanistic emotions inherent in the socialist movement.”106 The authors suggest that Mimei was more interested in beauty and justice than science or ideology, and when it became inevitable for him to steer away from the “hideousness” of political affairs, he decided to leave the front lines of politics by completely parting with the Marxists.107 He had written novels with overtly political themes before 1926, but dealt exclusively with beauty and the child’s heart (dōshin) since the declaration of commitment to children’s literature. The authors also make the point that because of his insistence on beauty, “he found ‘beauty’ in the military’s ideal of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere during the war” and wrote stories such as “Bokura mo sensō ni ikunda (Us boys are also going to war)” which they assume was based on a belief in “serving the holy war through children’s stories.”108 The authors attribute all of his political and literary ideals to his insistence on beauty and romanticism, in order to make the point that his decision to write children’s literature had nothing to do with children, but everything to do with his expression of beauty that could be achieved through the genre. They criticized this reason for

104 Ishii et al., Kodomo to bungaku, 24.
105 Ibid., 25.
106 Ibid., 17-18.
107 Ibid.
108 Ibid., 18.
writing children’s literature because they believed that children’s books should be written for children, not for the writer’s own desire for literary expression. For them, it was precisely the adult writer’s disregard for the child that allowed the writing of militaristic stories during the war.

Smith advocated a child centered perspective toward children’s literature, placing a great emphasis on what is pleasurable for children. Her use of the word “children” is undefined and unidentified just like her use of “children’s literature.” However, as Karatani Kōjin suggests in his article “The Discovery of the Child,” the criticism of disregard for the real child or the living child is flawed because there is no such thing as a “real child.” The child, with respect to literature, arises as a concept from the act of differentiating between the adult reader and the child reader and writing specifically for the child reader. The children that Smith as well as the authors of Kodomo to bungaku talk about arise as a concept out of their discourse of children’s literature. Shimizu articulates Ishii’s personal view of children as follows:

As a specialist of children's literature, Ishii’s main interest was books, and children as the recipients of books. Children did not come first. Books came before them. Furthermore, just as the West came before Japan, Western children’s books came before Japanese children’s books, and it was the same for her image of children. Ishii did not begin with the real children of Japan. The figure of the children of the West, the children that she saw at the libraries of America, Canada, and Britain that she toured, existed first, and then she searched for children who resembled that figure within Japanese society.

The argument in Kodomo to bungaku about the appropriate literature for children is actually based on an image of the child reader—more specifically, an Anglophone child reader. However, the argument is posed as if Mimei’s child is an adult image and the authors’ child is the real child. It was mentioned earlier that the beginning of foreign children’s literature was presented by the authors as being “guided by the actual imagination of children and their child-like

110 Shimizu, Kodomo no hon no genzai, 35.
sensibilities.”\textsuperscript{111} The dichotomy of exemplary foreign versus deviant Japanese children’s literature is further emphasized by their discussion of the real “living” child.

This discussion of the child is a lot more complicated than what the authors seem to have been aware of. The child is not something that can be driven out or brought back in to literature. Karatani suggests that such discussion of the real child obscures the fact that, “[a]lthough the objective existence of children seems self-evident, the ‘child’ we see today was discovered and constituted only recently.”\textsuperscript{112} By his argument, the objectification of the child was the result of Mimei’s decision to write children’s stories since a literature for children cannot exist without the discovery of a child as a separate entity from the adult. In this view, what Mimei did was not to drive out children from literature but to create the concept of the child within the world of Japanese literature. This argument is not without its own flaws but it brings up an important point about the child. The child, as a reader, does not have an objective existence outside of literature, but rather is born from the act of writing for children, which means that the child reader is under the control of the author’s concept of the child.

Jacqueline Rose’s book \textit{The Case of Peter Pan: or The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction} (1984) is based on a similar idea that one cannot write for an objectively existing child but only for an adult idea of the child, which may be evident from the book’s alternate title, \textit{The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction}, meaning it is impossible for adults to write for children (real living children). The book begins by saying, “[c]hildren’s fiction rests on the idea that there is a child who is simply there to be addressed and that speaking to it might be simple. It is an idea whose innocent generality covers up a multitude of sins.”\textsuperscript{113} Rose argues that children’s literature inevitably serves the desires of the adults creating it and that the guise of serving the needs of children ends up hiding those desires that are often oppressing or even “molesting” children. She states that children’s literature contains “the adult’s intention to get at the child with the child it portrays. If

\textsuperscript{111} Ishii et al., \textit{Kodomo to bungaku}, 26.

\textsuperscript{112} Karatani, “The Discovery of the Child,” 115.

\textsuperscript{113} Jaqueline Rose, \textit{The Case of Peter Pan: or The Impossibility of Children’s Fiction} (London: Macmillan, 1984), 1.
children’s fiction builds an image of the child inside the book, it does so in order to secure the child who is outside the book."\textsuperscript{114} If we think back to Shimizu’s observation that Ishii was looking for children who could fit her image of Western children, it might be said that Ishii, through \textit{Kodomo to bungaku}, was looking for stories that secure her own image of the child. Mimei may have written militaristic stories, but the reason was not because he was unaware of the child reader. He merely had a different image of the child reader in mind during the war, namely that of a child imperial subject, a shōkokumin. Ishii, while being so insistent on writing for living children so that adult ideologies will not be imposed on them, actually demanded those children to fit a specific image of her own ideal child reader, a Western child reader, in doing so.

The ideas presented in \textit{Kodomo to bungaku} criticized the inclusion of the thoughts of the writer and emphasized the awareness of the child reader, which, according to Shimizu, “because of the lack of the author’s subjectivity, led to an unconscious acceptance of prevailing views at that time, and the children being written about, as a matter of consequence, were not something that could break adult preconceptions.”\textsuperscript{115} Ishii’s ideas of a child-centered children’s literature ultimately universalized one version of an ideal child to be written for in Japanese children’s literature, not leaving room for any other version of the child. Without recognizing that her own conceptions of children were shaped by exposure to children’s literature in the English language within the conditions of postwar Japan, she frowned upon the writer’s individual conceptions being expressed in books for children. This is a common belief that still persists to this day. The writer of children's literature was essentially told not to include their own conceptions of childhood or society, which allowed the prevailing conceptions, subject to all the social and political conditions of the time, to make its way into the stories.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{115} Shimizu, \textit{Kodomo no hon no genzai}, 21.
Conclusion

Shimizu states that the reception of *Kodomo to bungaku* was split into two, one welcoming the call for a non-ideological, pleasurable, and easy to understand literature for children, and the other feeling that the individual thoughts and stances of writers were being rejected.\(^{116}\) However, “unrelated to what the motivation and intent were behind the book, *Kodomo to bungaku* gave the people who were trying to ride the waves of the times a foundation and delighted those people.”\(^{117}\) On the other hand, there were people like Miki Taku (author and translator of children’s literature) who were against the trends that *Kodomo to bungaku* advocated. Miki wrote in 1972: “in children’s literature, the writers themselves have been abandoned…writers are working themselves to the bone while writing solely for the child.”\(^{118}\) Such voices of opposition certainly existed and questioned the legitimacy and plausibility of the child-centered approach. A more comprehensive study into the different voices in this discourse may be necessary in understanding the ideological developments behind the construction of contemporary Japanese children’s literature.

Contemporary children’s literature is not often seen in terms of its political function. But that image itself hides the fact that it was shaped to fit certain ideals of a nation that had lost the war and was rebuilding as a democratic nation. The original building process of contemporary children’s literature was such that the changes being made were seen as more appropriate as a literature for children than previous traditions in Japan. It may be time now, after so many years have passed since the end of the war, to rethink the prevailing beliefs about children’s literature, understand their origin, and figure out whether those beliefs are limiting the genre’s development as a form of literary expression and depriving children of a broader range of stories to enjoy and learn from. This chapter has attempted to show that many aspects of children’s literature that are taken as universal truths or universal standards actually arose from a normalizing of a set of ideas imported through countries such as the U.S., Britain, and Canada by people like Ishii and the

\(^{116}\) Ibid., 20.

\(^{117}\) Ibid., 22.

other authors of *Kodomo to bungaku*. Chapter 2 will focus on the changes in the standards of translation that were advocated by Ishii, and the similar process of establishing one method as the norm.
Chapter 2
A New Tradition of Translation

Constructing a Tradition Through Translation

In 1938, Ishii began the publishing company Hakurin Shônenkan with this simple intention: “there are no books that we would want children to read, so let’s make them.” This statement is a good description of Ishii’s work in translating and publishing translations. She perceived a lack of reading material for children in Japan, and attempted to replenish the industry with translations of foreign works. Even in the 50s and 60s, she still held similar views toward the state of children’s literature in Japan. From the inauguration of Iwanami shônen bunko in 1950 until she resigned from Iwanami in 1954 to travel to the U.S., she did not publish any Japanese works for the series. In an essay written in 1980, she explains the reason for not including Japanese works; she recalls, “I read various [Japanese] books thinking to put in some Japanese works, but to me, whatever I read did not satisfy me completely.” Her dissatisfaction with the existing tradition of Japanese children’s literature led her to devote her career to the promotion of foreign works, which made a significant contribution to the inception of a new tradition of children’s literature founded on those foreign works.

Ishii was not alone in preferring foreign works over Japanese works, and the decision to focus mainly on translations for Iwanami shônen bunko was based on a survey of widely held opinions. The purpose of the series was to publish existing works rather than commission new work, so in order to produce a list of recommendations for publication, Iwanami organized a committee called Shônen Shôjo no Yomimono Momokusa Inkai (Diverse books for boys and girls committee). The committee conducted a survey asking five hundred intellectuals what books

119 Takeuchi, Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku, 9.
120 Ishii, Ishii Momoko korekushon V Essei-shū, 96.
121 The committee members were Hani Setsuko, Hayashi Tatsuo, Matsukata Saburô, Mitsuyoshi Natsuya, Miyamoto Shinobu, Nakai Masakazu, Nakano Yoshio, Nakaya Ukichirô, Shimizu Ikutarô, Yoshida Kinetarô, and Yoshino Genzaburô.
they wished children to read. Many suggestions were foreign “classics” of children’s literature, which led to the decision to put the focus on translations for the series.\textsuperscript{122} Takeuchi Miki states that this decision was “at the same time a result of the survey as well as the thought of the managers of Iwanami Shoten at that time.”\textsuperscript{123} This shows that there was a general consensus among intellectuals at the time in their preference of foreign children’s literature. However, Ishii’s selection of books differed from the results of the survey. Of the intellectuals who responded to the survey, Ishii was most taken by Seta Teiji (to become another author of \textit{Kodomo to bungaku} and one of the translators of Smith’s \textit{The Unreluctant Years}), who submitted a book list that was based on Anne Carroll Moore’s book \textit{My Roads to Childhood} (1920).\textsuperscript{124} Seta’s list was different from most others that merely listed foreign works already famous in Japan.\textsuperscript{125} Ishii contacted Seta, whom she was likely not acquainted with at the time, to discuss book selections for \textit{Iwanami shōnen bunko}. By deviating from the list of commonly known works of children’s literature available in Japan, Ishii sought to introduce a new body of foreign children’s literature to Japan.

Ishii seems to have had a clear idea of the kinds of books that she wished to introduce to Japanese children, which was based upon book lists that she was exposed to in Bertha Mahoney Miller’s books and \textit{The Horn Book}. These publications, along with Moore’s book, provided a basis for the selection of books for \textit{Iwanami shōnen bunko}. This is evident when we consider the first five books that were published for the series.

- Robert Louis Stevenson, \textit{Treasure Island}, translated by Sasaki Naojirō as \textit{Takarajima} (listed in both \textit{Realms of Gold} and \textit{My Roads to Childhood})

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{122} Takeuchi, \textit{Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku}, 67.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{124} Ibid., 73.
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*, translated by Murayama Eitarō as *Kurisumasu kyaroru* (listed in *Realms of Gold*, and while this specific title is not mentioned in *My Roads to Childhood*, Dickens is mentioned many times throughout the book)

Marie Hamsun, *A Norwegian Farm*, translated by Ishii Momoko as *Chiisana ushioi* (listed in *Five Years of Children’s Books* and *My Roads to Childhood*)

Jean Webster, *Daddy-Long-Legs*, translated by Endō Hisako as *Ashinaga ojisan* (listed in *Realms of Gold*)

Erich Kästner, *Das doppelte Lottchen*, translated by Takahashi Kenji as *Futari no Rotte* (this book was published later than Miller and Moore’s books but Kästner’s earlier book, *Emil and the Detectives* [original *Emil und die Detektive*], is listed in *My Roads to Childhood*)

Although two of the five books are not Anglophone in origin, it is likely that Ishii learned of the books through American sources, including but not limited to those by Miller and Moore mentioned above. She recollects in an essay written in 1980 that, during the initial periods of Shōnen Bunko, “the American Cultural Center had a very good catalog of children’s books, so [she] went there quite often.” She does not specify what her criteria for a “good” book list is, but it is clear that she relied heavily on American sources to for the selection of books for the Iwanami Shōnen Bunko, which ultimately set the trend for translated children’s literature in Japan in general. The directions for the series that Ishii set were largely unchanged even after she left Iwanami in 1954 to travel to the U.S., one reason being that Inui Tomiko remained in the editing team for around twenty years. Inui had been a close friend of Ishii’s, and as another author of *Kodomo to bungaku*, shared similar views on children’s literature. *Iwanami shōnen bunko* is still comprised predominantly of translated books today. Of the 254 books in its 2016 catalog, only 25 are original Japanese works.

In addition to introducing new foreign works, she influenced new trends in the quality of translations. Satō Motoko states that *Iwanami shōnen bunko* contributed to the standardization of

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complete translations (kan’yaku) in Japanese children’s literature.\(^\text{127}\) Although the literal meaning of kan’yaku is “complete translation,” the term also encompasses the idea of faithful translations that seek to portray the original work in all aspects. The ideology behind the *Iwanami shōnen bunko* project is outlined by Matsui Tadashi follows:

(1) To correctly transplant the classics of world children’s literature.
(2) To introduce fresh masterpieces of contemporary children's literature from various countries.
(3) To reform the sloppiness of conventional translations of children’s books in Japan, and to publish definitive translations using correct and beautiful Japanese.
(4) To publish small, affordable books with the aims of popularization.\(^\text{128}\)

The above is a short outline of the content of “Iwanami shōnen bunko hakkant ni saishite (On the occasion of the inauguration of *Iwanami shōnen bunko*),” which was printed at the end of every book in the series until it was replaced with a new version in the year 2000 when the series changed the cover layout and book size. Through this list it can be seen that, along with the purpose of introducing and popularizing foreign children’s literature, there was also the objective of publishing “definitive translations,” or teiyaku in Japanese. The word teiyaku is slightly different from the word kan’yaku in that it expresses the intention of replacing or revising the existing translations with one definitive version. The document itself states the intention to convey the “true form (makoto no sugata)” of the original work.\(^\text{129}\) This is representative of the belief that there is one correct method of translation—a method that does not alter the foreign original.

The standardization of unabridged and faithful translations had lasting implications for the work of the translator. The ideologies of kan’yaku and teiyaku allow translated works to retain their

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\(^{129}\) Quoted in Takeuchi, *Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku*, 76.
foreignness, unlike the majority of translations in prewar that changed settings and characters to Japanese ones and even changed moral or religious beliefs expressed in the books to fit those of Japanese society. There is much to be questioned about the cultural implications of exposing children to more foreign settings, characters, and morals, which will be discussed further on in this chapter. For now, it is important to note that *Iwanami shōnen bunko* embodied an ideology of faithfulness to the original that arises from a belief in the integrity of the works being translated, which is at once a kind of disbelief, or distrust, in the integrity of Japanese translators, not in their ability to translate, but in their tendency to recognize, select, and alter what they believe is inappropriate for Japanese children. It was a trend that undermined the authorial authority of the translator and limited their work to “copying” the original.

Ishii’s influence on faithfulness was not limited to the content. She was also involved in publishing translated picture books that impacted the form of picture books thereafter. In 1961, the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai (Home library research group), of which Ishii was a founding member, translated and edited *The Five Chinese Brothers* by Claire Huchet Bishop and Kurt Wiese (*Sina no gonin kyōdai*) and *Millions of Cats* by Wanda Gág (*100 man biki no neko*) and published them through Fukuinkan Shoten (a publishing company specializing in children’s books founded in 1952 by Satō Yoshikazu and Matsui Tadashi). The publication of the two books had a significant influence on the format of picture books published in Japan. Ishii herself comments in *Kodomo no toshokan*, “if we think of how picture books in monograph form appeared [through the publication of the above books], and since then, how the views of the people working in publishing picture books in Japan had changed, the role that the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai played in terms of children’s books that year was quite significant.” Not only did the books set a standard for how monograph form (*tankōbon*) picture books could be published, but they also influenced the layout of the words. Takeuchi states, “the *Sekai kessaku ehon* series by Fukuinkan, which began after the success of the two books, published picture books with horizontal printing, when the standard at the time was to use vertical printing for foreign picture

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books translated into Japanese. This created a new trend of being faithful to the original work.132 This new trend added a new layer to the concept of faithfulness to the original by keeping faithful to the visual aspects of the original foreign books. By using horizontal printing, the layout of the picture books could look more like the original and recreate a similar reading experience. By now, the standard of Japanese language picture books has become horizontal printing even when they are original Japanese works. Ishii’s reason for choosing The Five Chinese Brothers and Millions of Cats for publication was because “they had been loved by children in the U.S. and Britain and even the children of Katsura Bunko loved them when they read the English version, so they must be well accepted by other children in Japan.”133 Here we see once again a belief in the quality of these foreign books and their ability to give pleasure to children. The quote above portrays an assumption that books well received by children in the U.S. and Britain will also be well accepted by children in a different place. This universal view of the “tastes” of child readers is another example of Ishii’s belief that there is one correct standard for children’s literature. These standards that were embodied in her work as a translator and editor of translations may have had an even greater and more direct influence on the publishing industry than ideas laid out in Kodomo to bungaku—leading the way to a new version of children’s literature by example.

The Politics of Translation

As mentioned earlier, the trends in translation that were standardized in the 1950s with Iwanami shōnen bunko remain much the same to this day. However, the conditions of publishing translations prior to that point had been tumultuous. A look at the various changes that the industry underwent leading up to 1950 will provide a better understanding of the conditions under which Ishii was able to initiate new trends in translation. During the 1940s, the regulations surrounding the publication of translations went through many changes under the two different military regimes: that of the Empire of Japan in the first half of the decade and that of

132 Takeuchi, Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku, 11.
133 Ibid., 36.
Occupation in the latter half. The GHQ/SCAP was especially involved in inducing the Japanese government to implement new laws regarding translation, which ultimately led to conditions that favoured Ishii’s work of publishing Anglophone and European works in translation. In April of 1950, GHQ/SCAP issued a memorandum to the Japanese Monbushō (Ministry of Education) regarding the infringement of rights to printed material under foreign copyright, and in August of the same year, they advised that the Japanese government revise copyright laws according to the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works as revised in Brussels in 1948. Matsui states in a paper given at a symposium in year 2000, “the publication of American picture books in translation became lively as if in response to this kind of political movement.” This is a trend that was also true for many types of children’s books other than picture books. It is also possible that strict copyright laws favoured faithful translations over adaptations. The inauguration of Iwanami shōnen bunko in 1950 was not a coincidence; it began under political conditions that facilitated its existence.

Similar to the hidden foreign policy behind philanthropic programs like Rockefeller’s Creative Fellowship, the political forces surrounding the publishing industry were strategically discreet during the Occupation. “From September 1945 through October 1949, the Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) under GHQ/SCAP carried out censorship on mass media (newspapers, books and journals, broadcasting, film, theater, and kamishibai) as well as personal media (post mail, telephone, and telegraph).” Although by 1950 such official censorship had ended, the Allied forces still had control over the publication of translations through less direct means such as controlling which publishing companies can obtain permission to translate copyrighted material. A general understanding of censorship during the Occupation that was widely held until recently is expressed by Tomi Suzuki,

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134 Matsui, “Oboegaki,” 221.
135 Ibid.
the existence of the Occupation forces’ censorship apparatus was concealed from the public. In contrast to prewar Japanese Home Ministry censorship, which exercised authority by making its censorship explicit, the Occupation-period censorship utilized methods that eliminated the traces of censorship. As a result, the memory of GHQ/SCAP censorship has been largely forgotten.\(^{137}\)

However, such claims have been complicated by Jonathan Abel, who argues in his 2012 book, *Redacted: The Archives of Censorship in Transwar Japan*, that “both regimes [wartime and postwar occupation] maintained internal and external mechanisms of control”\(^{138}\) and “the high-point for the explicit and visible work of state censors in Japan occurred between 1928 and 1936…And beginning in the later 1930s, cooperative measures outside what is generally considered to be the work of explicit censorship took on greater importance.”\(^{139}\) He is suggesting that the wartime regime in the late 30s and early 40s was already moving toward an invisible system of censorship and that 1945 did not bring about as significant a shift as it is generally believed. He insists,

the notion that an internal, insidious, invisible censorship that promoted self-censorship as its explicit policy was an American export to Japan is both counter to the history of censorship in Japan in the twentieth century and to the structure of censorship, which is always necessarily a split between external and internal, visible and invisible.\(^{140}\)

However, Abel’s argument is misleading because he is discussing the visibility of censorship strictly in the sense that already printed books are given visible traces of the work of a censor. Visible traces on paper are not the only way government control over the publishing industry can become apparent. Specifically for Ishii, the “cooperative measures” which included meetings

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\(^{137}\) Ibid.


\(^{139}\) Ibid., 13.

\(^{140}\) Ibid.
between the Home Ministry and publishers such as Kikuchi Kan\(^{141}\) would have been very “visible,” since she was well acquainted with Kikuchi and many others in the publishing industry. The increase in nationalistic and militaristic content in publications as well as the decrease in the overall number of publications would have also been indicative of government control. During the Occupation, various opinions that could not be expressed during wartime could be published and the number of publications increased, generating a semblance of freedom under the American ideological banner of freedom of speech. There were clearly significant differences in “visibility” between the two regimes that extend far beyond what can be discerned from archived traces of censorship.

Another blatantly visible censorship by the wartime government that did not leave a trace “on paper” was the control of the distribution of paper. According to Yamanaka Hisashi (a writer of children’s literature who is considered to have written some of the first examples of contemporary children’s literature and has recently written many books on wartime children’s literature), there were 3,395 publishing companies in Japan in February of 1943, and because this number was too large for the regulation of public opinion (genron tōsei) the publishing mandate (shuppan jigyō rei) was promulgated and only 174 companies remained by March of 1944.\(^{142}\) This meant that only the publishing companies aligned with the guidelines of the military regime had the ability to physically print books, and all others, including Ishii’s *Hakurin shōnenkan*, were forced to shut down, hence the “invisibility” of censorship.

Another key difference between the wartime censorship and Occupation censorship was the visibility of the *intent* behind the censorship. The militaristic intent of wartime censorship regarding children’s literature would have been very apparent, while the reason for GHQ/SCAP’s involvement in publishing children’s literature was more obscure. For example, Matsui states that “the improvement of copyright and translation publication rights laws was closely related to raising the quality of publication and improving the distribution of good books, and it also became the precondition for our country’s publication industry to be internationally

\(^{141}\) Ibid.

\(^{142}\) Yamanaka, *Shōkokumin sensō bunka shi*, 11-12.
recognized.”\textsuperscript{143} Matsui, who was one of the authors of \textit{Kodomo to bungaku} and a founder of and editor at Fukuinkan, does not mention at all the intentions behind such interventions and the benefits that the U.S. reaped from them, even while explicating the political interventions of GHQ/SCAP, only focusing on the developments that made improvements to the publishing industry in Japan.

The benefits that the U.S. sought through direct censorship are easily discernable: controlling the image of America in the text, not allowing Japan to manipulate translations for domestic agendas, and regulating the writing system. The direct benefits of inducing Japanese Ministry of Education to comply with the Berne Convention may not be as obvious until we consider who exactly the convention favours. Lawrence Venuti suggests,

\begin{quote}
[i]nternational copyright law favors British and American publishers in this trade imbalance by reserving for the author (or the publisher as the author’s assignee) the right to license translations of a work. Even though the Berne Convention recognizes the translator’s copyright in the translation, it still protects the author's exclusive ownership of the original work and derivatives made therefrom.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

The trade imbalance between English and Japanese children’s literature was no exception, and in 1950s Japan, the publishing industry was quickly becoming saturated with translations of English children’s literature while works of Japanese children’s literature were not being translated into English. This not only created a one-way stream of cultural transference, but also gave English-speaking countries such as the U.S. a financial advantage since Japanese publishers needed to pay the foreign authors and publishers to publish translations of their copyrighted books, while Japanese authors and publishers had a relatively small foreign source of income. With such changes, the postwar publishing industry operated under a very different infrastructure from that of prewar Japan, an infrastructure that required changes in the way translation was published, which gave Ishii the opportunity to make those changes.

\textsuperscript{143} Matsui, “Oboegaki,” 221.

\textsuperscript{144} Lawrence Venuti, \textit{The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference} (London: Routledge, 1998), 161.
Forming Cultural Identities Through Translation

If we consider translation as a way of importing a foreign culture, it is important to discuss the consequences of the changes that Ishii brought about in translating children’s literature. Because translation is a transference of a foreign language to a domestic language, it can be described as the domestication of foreign works of literature. However, Ishii’s insistence on faithfulness of translations had the effect of influencing the domestic Japanese culture to resemble the foreign culture where the works originated. This dynamic between the domestic and foreign cultures is an issue of what Takeuchi calls “the balance between ‘domestication’ and ‘foreignization’ in translation.”  

A domesticating translation is one that manipulates the original to fit the domestic culture, while a foreignizing translation is one that attempts to retain aspects of the foreign culture in the translated work. Venuti argues in The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference that it is more ethical to make cultural differences more visible in translations, since it prohibits the translation from appropriating the foreign text for domestic purposes. He suggests that a domesticating translation, which alters the foreign text to fit the domestic culture, erases cultural differences and subjects the text to being used for domestic purposes, while a foreignizing translation that allows the reader to recognize cultural differences can be more respectful of the culture that it comes from. The problem is more complicated than this argument makes it seem, however, not only because any one translation is never either domesticating or foreignizing but always a combination of both, but also because a foreignizing translation can be just as useful in serving domestic purposes as domesticating translations.

Capturing the foreign culture within which the original works were born was central to Ishii’s approach, which can be understood as a foreignizing tendency. However, this tendency may not always be apparent in the translated text itself. Faithfulness, in Ishii’s case, had as much to do with the reading experience as the actual words and sentences themselves. In 1972, Ishii travelled to England in the midst of working on translations of a collection of stories by Eleanor

145 Takeuchi, Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku, 61.
146 Venuti, The Scandals of Translation, 76.
Farjeon and the Peter Rabbit series by Beatrix Potter. The purpose of the trip was to visit the places where Farjeon and Potter lived and wrote about and gain a better understanding of the details in their works.\textsuperscript{147} The person who helped Ishii with her visit was Eileen Colwell (1904-2002), a British pioneer of children’s libraries whom Ishii met during her second trip to Toronto in 1961 when they both attended a storytelling event organized by the children’s section of the Toronto Public Library. Travelling through England with Colwell as well as by herself, Ishii attempted to soak in the environment of where the writers had been. It was very important to her that the feelings that were experienced in Britain should retain the authenticity even in the Japanese translation. In her recollection of the trip in \textit{Jidō bungaku no tabi}, Ishii explains, “I did not want to do meticulous research. I wanted to feel the atmosphere there…I was constantly surprised at how the works of the two authors [Farjeon and Potter] were inseparably linked to the natural features of the region. So I wanted to walk on the places that gave birth to their works with my own stride.”\textsuperscript{148} From this statement it is quite clear that she was not looking for correct definitions or references, but wished to capture the authentic “feeling” that the authors drew inspiration from. This approach to translation goes beyond just transferring the meaning of one language to another, attempting to include the feeling of the environment in which it was written. Although this approach has become quite standard in present day Japan, many translators working in the prewar period took the opposite approach of changing the names of foreign characters and locations to Japanese ones, eliminating religious content that would not be understood in Japan, or simply cutting out all cultural references and presenting the basic plot.\textsuperscript{149} Such practices all but disappeared in postwar, for which the \textit{Iwanami shōnen bunko} series had a significant impact. The new tradition of translation based on faithfulness did more than just introducing foreign standards of writing, but also introduced a more authentic foreign climate.

As stated earlier, no translation is limited to either foreignizing or domesticating characteristics, and Ishii’s translations are no exception. Takeuchi argues, “Ishii’s stance towards translation can be said to lean towards domestication because she emphasized Japanese culture over British

\textsuperscript{147} A detailed account of the trip can be found in Ishii, \textit{Jidō bungaku no tabi}, 104-254.

\textsuperscript{148} Ishii, \textit{Jidō bungaku no tabi}, 104-5.

\textsuperscript{149} See Satō, \textit{‘Ienaki ko’ no tabi}. 
culture and Japanese over English.”\textsuperscript{150} Although Takeuchi uses the word culture, her conclusion is based entirely on a textual analysis of Ishii’s translations. Takeuchi takes into account the fact that Ishii used shichigochō (7-5 rhythm that uses successions of seven and five syllables such as used in haiku and waka) and parts of Japanese children’s songs and nursery rhymes in order to make the point that her translations are domesticating. This may be true linguistically, but it misses the point that what Ishii was trying to capture through the usage of Japanese linguistic practices was essentially an experience that was most faithful to her own experience of the English text. One way of looking at Ishii’s translation is as linguistically domesticating and experientially foreignizing. Venuti argues that some domesticating translations “form domestic cultural identities by appropriating foreign texts.”\textsuperscript{151} Despite domesticating the linguistic style, Ishii’s translations do not appropriate the foreign texts to Japanese culture. Venuti’s ethical assertion that “[b]ad translation shapes toward the foreign culture a domestic attitude that is ethnocentric”\textsuperscript{152} does not quite apply either. Ishii attempted to mimic the foreign attitude toward the foreign text and led readers to do the same through her translations. It may be the case that Ishii’s translation should not be looked at in terms of foreignizing or domesticating at all, and considered simply as “universalizing.” Her attempts to capture the experience of the English language original using conventional aspects of the Japanese language such as the shichigochō exemplifies an idea of the universality of language that does not favour any country, promoting a singular culture for the universal child.

A question that we can now ask is, what kinds of consequences arise from the globalizing quality of Ishii’s translations? Growing up with books that authentically portray foreign cultures can influence the formation of identities regarding both the foreign and domestic cultures. Venuti provides a clear explanation of the relationship between translation and cultural identities:

\begin{quote}
[translation patterns that come to be fairly established] fix stereotypes for foreign cultures, excluding values, debates, and conflicts that don’t appear to serve domestic
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\textsuperscript{150} Takeuchi, Ishii Momoko no hon’yaku, 61-62.
\textsuperscript{151} Venuti, The Scandals of Translation, 76.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 81.
agendas. In creating stereotypes, translation may attach esteem or stigma to specific ethnic, racial, and national groupings, signifying respect for cultural difference or hatred based on ethnocentrism, racism, or patriotism. In the long run, translation figures in geopolitical relations by establishing the cultural grounds of diplomacy, reinforcing alliances, antagonisms, and hegemonies between nations.\textsuperscript{153}

One consequence of translation is the creation of stereotypes that are constructed not only through the act of translation but also through the selection process, publication, and distribution. At every stage, the thoughts and beliefs of the people involved in the project shape the translation into a form that fits those notions, and the reader’s image of the foreign countries where the works originate are then shaped through these translations. While Ishii’s translations also convey her own thoughts and beliefs, her insistence on faithfulness and recreating the same reading experience acted as a way of limiting Japan-centered stereotypes. On the flip side, the same qualities may have also generated a foreign-centered viewpoint from which the domestic culture could be evaluated. Venuti states, “[t]ranslation forms domestic subjects by enabling a process of ‘mirroring’ or self-recognition: the foreign text becomes intelligible when the reader recognizes himself or herself in the translation by identifying the domestic values that motivated the selection of that particular foreign text, and that are inscribed in it through a particular strategy.”\textsuperscript{154} In Ishii’s case, her strategies were motivated by the foreign values that she attempted to imitate. Her selections were based on the belief that foreign works were superior to Japanese works as literature for children. The self-image (of Japanese children’s literature) that is recognized by readers of Ishii’s translations is one of deviance from the norm (foreign children’s literature), generating stereotypes for the domestic culture.

The role of translation in forming cultural identities and stereotypes has political value, which means that Ishii, as an advocate of authentic representation of foreign cultures, would have had political value as well. Ishii’s anecdote about publishing her translation of \textit{Winnie-the-Pooh} in 1950 offers a good look into the foreign military involvement in the publishing industry at the

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 67-8.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 77.
time. She recalls how she received a call from Eihōsha (a new publishing company founded in 1949) informing her that the rights to the translation of *Winnie-the-Pooh* had been authorized for Eihōsha and that they chose to use Ishii’s translation.\(^{155}\) She recalls that when she visited Eihōsha, there was one man in British military uniform and others who seemed to be British along with employees of Eihōsha. During the meeting, they compared the original English version to Ishii’s Japanese version and came to the conclusion that it could be published.\(^{156}\) According to Takeuchi, the Eihōsha version made many stylistic changes to the Iwanami version published in 1940,\(^{157}\) replacing older usages of kana and kanji to the newer usages which had come in place under the command of SCAP. It is evident in this case that the British military, who were in Japan in support of the Allied Occupation, were able to directly control the image of Britain represented in translations during the Occupational period. The U.S. military would have had the same ability through the systems of censorship discussed earlier. However, the foreign influence on translations in Japan did not end with the Occupation. With cultural interventions such as the numerous exchange programs as described in the Introduction, the U.S. imposed upon Japan a cultural hegemony which allowed them to control, or at least influence, the stereotypes being formed about the U.S. and other democratic countries through translations. The U.S. was also selective in representing Japanese literature through English translations. Venuti states, “American publishers…established a canon of Japanese fiction in English [during the 1950s and 60s] that was not only unrepresentative, but based on a well-defined stereotype that has determined reader expectations for roughly forty years.”\(^{158}\) From the end of the Second World War and into the height of the Cold War in the 50s and 60s, the U.S. endeavoured to direct Japan to becoming a democratic nation, and promoted positive images of democratic allies of the U.S. while also controlling the image of Japan in the U.S. through strategically, and in many cases indirectly, manipulating translation. Inviting people such as Ishii Momoko who were

\(^{155}\) Ishii, *Ishii Momoko shū 7 Essei shū*, 264.

\(^{156}\) Ibid.


\(^{158}\) Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation*, 72.
active in both translating and publishing to study in the U.S. was one discreet tactic for exerting influence on the formation of new traditions of translation in Japan.

Language and Dehistoricization

In addition to its foreignizing aspect, translation has another quality that allows for the promotion of foreign cultures: the capacity to be revised or completely retranslated. Ishii’s distinctive stance towards translation was to revise her own translations on multiple occasions after the first publication. For *Winnie-the-Pooh*, she made her final revision in 1997, fifty-seven years after it was first published in 1940. The possibility for translations to be revised or rewritten completely by another translator allows the works to fit the current linguistic, stylistic, and also ideological trends. Venuti states, “[f]oreign literatures tend to be dehistoricized by the selection of texts for translation, removed from the foreign literary traditions where they draw their significance. And foreign texts are often rewritten to conform to styles and themes that currently prevail in domestic literatures.”¹⁵⁹ The dehistoricization occurs not only through the selection of texts but also the rewriting of translations. A book written in the nineteenth century can be translated into the most current literary or colloquial language in twenty-first century Japan, making it more accessible than even the original would be to the present-day native speakers of the original language. In this way, the body of foreign works that comprise a large part of children’s literature in Japan can always remain “up-to-date” and accessible, while older, especially prewar, domestic children’s literature retain their older language and become difficult for the contemporary child to read. Dehistoricizing foreign texts actually allows the foreign canons of children’s literature to remain readable and persistently dominate the reading lists of contemporary Japanese children.

One of Ishii’s main reasons for her revisions was the belief in using simpler language in children’s literature. In an essay titled “Motto yasashiku” (Easier), she states, “the sentences written by adults still have a lot of bungochō [classical literary language style]. I think this kind

of language should be quickly reduced and only used in special circumstances.”

She criticizes the use of words like mohaya, tsuini, and sura and suggests that they be replaced with mō, tōtō, and sae, which she feels are the words used in daily life. Through her distinction between adult writers and child readers, she expresses the notion that “literary language” is for adults and vernacular language is more appropriate for children. She goes as far as to say, “it is for certain that a kind of egotism inside of us adults leads to writing that is effeminate [nayonayo], affected [sutekippoku], imposing [ikameshiku], and difficult [muzukashiku].” Her image of literary language is one of egotistical beautification that is inappropriate in children’s literature.

However, Ishii’s distinction between adult language and language that children understand does not take into account the fact that, in prior historical contexts, the difficult literary language (or bungochō) was once the standard language used to write children’s literature in Japan. The standards of what is simple or accessible language changes with time, which means that publishing books for children under those standards ultimately eliminates older works written in an older version of Japanese.

The ideas about language presented by Ishii as a priori truths were only preconceptions about language that were socially constructed under specific historical conditions of Japan’s modernization. Her views about the difference between written and spoken language are likely based on ideas that were initially constructed during the rapid modernization of Japan in the Meiji era. A movement began in the late 1800s called genbun-itchi, which was essentially a search for a new vernacular written language. According to Tomi Suzuki, “[t]he proposal for a new vernacular written language was initiated at the end of the Tokugawa period by scholars of Western learning who noticed that modern Western languages did not exhibit the disjunction that existed in Japan between the written languages (especially those based on classical Chinese) and the spoken languages.” Writing in a style that resembles daily speech was a new concept that

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160 Ishii, Ishii Momoko korekushon V Essei-shū, 70.
161 Ibid.
162 Ibid., 71.
was a direct influence of the modern nationalist West, and was a deliberate effort of Japanese intellectuals to modernize in reaction to the prevailing social conditions. Referring to the Naturalist writers of the late 1800s and early 1900s Japan who experimented with the *genbun-itchi* style, Suzuki states,

Japanese Naturalists advocated a direct transcription of objective reality and promoted the view of language as a transparent vehicle. However, many of their texts...in fact dramatize the process by which certain paradigms of reality came into existence not merely as a matter of personal experience or perception but as a result of a historical process in which an ideologically charged reality—which emerged through the mediation of, and interaction with, representations in Western literature—was constructed through language and then soon came to be taken for granted as an *a priori* reality.\(^\text{164}\)

It can be seen in this description that the belief in an objective reality that is represented through a “transparent” language, one that resembles spoken language, was already constructed and taken for granted in the early 1900s. The “ideologically charged” aspect of a reality perceived through literature soon became hidden, just as the “ideologically charged” aspect of childhood became hidden under the concept of the “real child.”

Ishii seems to have been unaware of the constructive function of language in shaping the perception of reality. In “Motto yasashiku,” Ishii’s argument is that “present day children cannot read as many characters as children in the past,” suggesting that newspapers should use simpler everyday words like *motte iru* rather than *shōyū suru* to say “to have.”\(^\text{165}\) Not being aware of the ideologies behind different styles of languages, she saw style as simply serving the objective reality of the present moment. This belief is what led to Ishii’s value judgments about spoken language as being “better” than literary language for children, taking the putative transparency of modern national language (be it English or Japanese, despite either’s distinct evolution) as a sign of superiority. The standards of linguistic style in contemporary Japanese children’s literature took shape under such tendencies of hierarchizing languages. As a result, this gave ascendance to

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\(^\text{164}\) Ibid., 47.

\(^\text{165}\) Ishii, *Ishii Momoko korekushon V Essei-shū*, 69.
a specific ideologically charged reality that was from the outset perceived as an a priori reality, helping form a perception of the “real child” based on that version of reality.

Conclusion

Translation used to be understood simply as the transference from one language to another, which hides the multifaceted processes that are required for a foreign work to be translated and published domestically, and with that, the ideologies involved in every stage of translation. In order to understand the function of translation within society, it is important to read into the complexities of the process through which translation becomes invested with ideologies. Andre Haag states,

“[t]he long-term and far-reaching implications of translation for Japanese modernity have little regard for disciplinary boundaries; proper inquiry into this topic calls for a consideration of “translation” not simply in terms of language and texts, but in the broader sense of what motivates translation, what political and cultural developments translation makes possible, and what the sociopolitical consequences of a particular culture of translation may be.”

Translation has always played a large part in Japanese modernity, but the culture of translation underwent many changes during the nation’s modern history. Changing sociopolitical conditions, especially with regards to international relations, influenced changes in standards of translation. Different generations may have read different translations of the same books under very different historical moments, and each translation at each moment must reflect the ideologies of the specific conditions under which it was published. For this reason, it is important to understand what Haag calls “the broader sense of what motivates translation.” Ishii’s personal motivation may have been the perceived lack in reading material for children in Japan, but broader political

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motivations operating through law, censorship, and intercultural programs surrounded and shaped her work, leading to broader consequences she may have not foreseen.
Chapter 3
The Mimicry of Children’s Libraries

Importing the Concept of the Children’s Library

A major development in publishing children’s books in the latter half of the twentieth century was the creation of new channels of mass distribution, which allowed easy access to books for children in all parts of the country. It may be taken for granted in Japan now that most public libraries have a separate children’s section or an attached children’s library, or that most bookstores have an extensive children’s book section comprising of picture books, children’s fictions series by various publishers, and educational books about world history or science. These spaces for children in libraries or bookstores often have sitting areas for children with colourful interior, carpeted floors, and low bookshelves to ensure visual and corporeal comfort for children. What people may not know, however, is that such spaces in the public sphere for children and children’s books had been quite rare until the late 70s. Japan in the 50s and 60s saw the rise of various movements toward providing books for children and promoting reading among them, but it was the late 70s that brought about a massive increase in the number of public libraries and the children’s libraries within them. One of the most significant events that triggered this momentum was the publication of Ishii Momoko’s Kodomo no toshokan (Children’s library) in 1965, which is a detailed account of her experiment with running a home library for children, Katsura Bunko. The book provides a guidebook-like description of the first seven years of Katsura Bunko, which Ishii began in 1958 in her own home located in Ogikubo, Tokyo. Following the guidelines of Ishii’s experiment, similar home libraries were established across the country.

The discourse that Ishii used in advocating the establishment of children’s libraries was also founded upon conveying the difference between Japan and foreign countries, especially the U.S., Canada, and Britain where she saw organized systems of children’s libraries already in place.

168 Ibid., 36.
She recognized a lack of awareness in Japan of the importance of children’s libraries, as well as the role of librarians in selecting and promoting children’s books.\textsuperscript{169} She explains in \textit{Kodomo no toshokan} that she decided to provide a home library for children after traveling to the U.S. and learning that American children’s libraries provide a space for librarians, writers, and publishers to study the way children interact with books.\textsuperscript{170} She observes that in America and Europe, “for fifty years, one of the big successes of children’s libraries was to learn from the reactions shown by children, raise the standards of books, and maintain those standards.”\textsuperscript{171} Such practices were not yet developed in Japan in the 1950s, and she expresses a strong awareness of “the difference between them and us [\textit{higa no sa}]” that she began to picture in her head while living abroad.\textsuperscript{172} She felt that “Japanese society [\textit{wa}]s bound to old ways” and wished to somehow guide people into new ways of thinking.\textsuperscript{173}

The model of the children’s library that Ishii introduced to Japan was primarily American, not only because she spent the most time in the U.S. and studied library systems at a U.S. school, but also because the history of children’s libraries in the U.S. dates back to the late nineteenth century; a standardized system was already established at a national scale, which was rare even in the so called “Western” countries. American children’s libraries provided a fully developed and functioning model that Ishii could introduce to Japan. What Ishii might not have been aware of is that the model of children’s libraries in America developed in the latter half nineteenth century after the civil war under a culture different from that of Japan, especially with regards to the culture surrounding the library’s users: children living in America at the time. Just as a book projects its own image of an ideal reader, a library also projects its image of an ideal user, and the ideal user of the American model of children’s libraries is inevitably an American child. In other words, a library system embodies its own model of ideal users, and when that system is

\textsuperscript{169} Ishii, \textit{Kodomo no toshokan}, 264.
\textsuperscript{170} Ibid., 3-4.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid., 4.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid., 263.
\textsuperscript{173} Ibid., 264.
introduced into a different culture, the model of its users is introduced at the same time. Here it is important to recognize again that the “children” in the discourse surrounding libraries are not “real children” but a concept of children as users of libraries. Ishii’s criticism of the old ways of Japanese society was directed at adults who did not understand the American methods that she wished to implement in Japan; however, children in Japan also could not be expected to understand the concept of a children’s library. Not only did the work of importing the American model of children’s libraries require Ishii to convince adults to understand and provide the service, but it also required her to educate children to understand the concept of the library and learn how to become its users.

Shimizu Masako points out an instance when Ishii shows her awareness of the ideal user of children's libraries in her book, *Kodomo no dokusho no michibiki kata* (How to guide children in reading books). Shimizu highlights Ishii’s recollection of the time when she spent two years from 1956 to 1958 regularly visiting a countryside (identified only as W village) located in the mountains of the northern part of Miyagi Prefecture. After returning from her stay in the U.S., she was looking for an elementary school that would allow her to read books to their students, and the principal of the W village school agreed to give her one hour each week with the fifth year B class. After two years reading books to village children, she made the decision to begin her home library in Tokyo thinking that countryside children were not the ideal subjects for her research. Comparing the children of the countryside and those of Tokyo she wrote, “after seeing children of the village, Tokyo children seemed so smart and active. Not only are they able to read the words, they are also very accurate in their understanding...all in all, I was able to meet [in Tokyo] the child reader that I was imagining in my head at Katsura Bunko.”

This is an important comment to highlight, because the fact that Ishii was able to find her ideal readers among children living in the largest city in Japan seems to suggest that, by visiting children’s libraries in some of the largest cities in U.S. and Canada, she had gained her image from the

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174 Ibid., 265.
176 A full list of the cities she visited can be found in page 13 of the Introduction. She visited children’s libraries in all of those cities.
most common users of those libraries. Her intent may have been to tailor her library to the children, but in large part, she was looking for children who would fit her ideals for a children’s library.

The process of teaching children the concept of a library can be seen in *Kodomo no toshokan*’s description of the first few years of running Katsura Bunko. During this initial period, the children did not understand the purpose of the library space, treating it as a kind of play or study space. However, as time went on, they learned to treat the library as a place to read in or borrow books from, even the smallest children learning the exact process of writing their name in the right spot on a library card and taking out no more than three books at a time. By acquiring the ability to follow such procedures, each individual child could become a “user” of the library who is entitled to a set of rights and is subject to responsibilities as inscribed in the rules of the library, which instills an ideology regarding the role of the individual in sharing public property among citizens. As users of Ishii’s library, children were educated to become accustomed to not only the American version of children’s libraries, but also the conventions of American institutions.

### Foreign Assistance

Once again, what allowed Ishii to successfully disseminate the concept of children’s libraries and educate children to be users of that library was closely tied with the political conditions of the 50s and 60s. The advent of the Cold War and the U.S.-Japan military alliance made through the Security Treaty first signed in San Francisco in 1951 led to many opportunities through assistance and exchange programs supported by both countries. Article II of the Security Treaty states:

> The Parties will contribute toward the further development of peaceful and friendly international relations by strengthening their free institutions, by bringing about a better understanding of the principles upon which these institutions are founded, and by promoting conditions of stability and well-being. They will seek to eliminate conflict in

Ishii participated in this cause by disseminating the American model of children’s libraries and educating children to become users of that library, which, as alluded to earlier, can be thought of as one process through which the Japanese population could begin to gain a better understanding of principles behind American institutions, operate according to those principles, and become custodians of them.

Charles Fahs, in his memorandum to the Rockefeller Foundation written in 1948, expresses his own thoughts on the importance of facilitating the implementation of library systems in Japan based on an American model. He states that the “[m]ilitary government [GHQ/SCAP] in Japan is already actively trying to improve standards of library administration and to broaden the concept of the public library” and also that “at a later date it will probably be quite important for The Rockefeller Foundation to grant several more fellowships in librarianship.”\footnote{Charles Fahs, “Comments on Japan,” accessed June 7, 2017, http://rockefeller100.org/items/show/2579.} Ishii’s goal with Katsura Bunko was to ultimately help create public children’s libraries across Japan, and it is quite probable that it was also what Fahs had in mind when he selected her to receive the Creative Fellowship. Fahs also suggests,

plans for a Diet Library…is important to reorientation not as a new national public library but primarily through the inclusion in the plan of a research service modeled after the Legislative Reference Service of the United States Library of Congress. Such a service is essential for the strengthening of the legislature in Japan vis-à-vis the administration, one of the most important aspects of reorientation.\footnote{Ibid.}

Although he is talking specifically about the Diet Library in this passage, his awareness of the importance of library administration in the overall reorientation of Japan was most likely the
reason he planned Ishii’s stay in the U.S. almost entirely around visits to children’s libraries, ending with a three-month course at the Carnegie Library School in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania taught by Elizabeth Nesbitt (1897-1977). From Nesbitt, Ishii learned “for the first time, the skills to view the birth of English language children’s literature in terms of social and cultural history and in an objective way,” and she endeavoured to recreate that history in Japan.

Not only did the Creative Fellowship provide the example and the impetus for Ishii’s library, but also the personal connections that were made during her stay in the United States further assisted with the process long after Ishii’s return to Japan. As mentioned in the previous chapter, English language books were donated to her library from Toronto librarians. Furthermore, Ishii mentions in Jidō bungaku no tabi that Fahs had continued to send her books and clippings of articles she might be interested in, ever since her fellowship until he passed away in 1980. Although she does not specify the contents, it would be safe to assume that they would have included information about children’s libraries in America. Resources for maintaining, studying, and researching the library were made freely available to Ishii through such connections made through the fellowship.

Other American organizations such as the Asia Foundation also helped Ishii have the success and influence that she had. For example, Ishii was a founding member of the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai, which sought to improve children’s library services, assist with home libraries across Japan, and promote the establishment of public children’s libraries. The members included others who were running home libraries of their own. One prominent member was Muraoka Hanako (1893-1968), one of the most influential translators and writers of children’s literature perhaps best known for her translation of the Anne of Green Gables series, who began what is considered the first home library in Japan Michio Bunko Raiburarii in 1952. The research group was

180 Ishii, Jidō bungaku no tabi, 48.
181 Ibid., 3.
182 Muraoka was also an advocate of Anglophone children’s literature. She was exposed to Anglophone culture at a very early age because her father was a Christian and was baptized at a Canadian Methodist Church in Kōfu, Yamanshi. At the age of 10, she entered Toyō Eiwa Jogakkō (Toyo Eiwa Female School) where she learned English from a Canadian missionary, Isabella Blackmore.
influential not only in the proliferation of home libraries for children but also in contemporary children’s literature in general, especially in terms of book selection and publishing. They received assistance from various foreign sources, including donations from the Asia Foundation to send books to home libraries of the group’s members.\textsuperscript{183} The group also published a bulletin about their work with the help of donations, and Ishii states that when asking for donations, “the people who most willingly gave a hand were foreigners.”\textsuperscript{184} The willingness of the “foreigners” clearly had, at least in large part, a very political reason, which, for example, is evident in the fact that the Asia Foundation was primarily funded by the CIA and originally sanctioned by the U.S. National Security Council.\textsuperscript{185} Even when she wanted to show movies at her library, she found that she could “borrow good films more easily by consulting foreign embassies or libraries than reaching out to Japanese film companies or libraries,”\textsuperscript{186} which is evidence that at every step her work was aided by foreign organizations. The foreign assistance that was available was quite clearly pointed out in Ishii’s book, which meant that other home libraries would have been made aware of those sources of assistance. One motivation for reaching out to foreign organizations was the relative lack of assistance available from the Japanese government or organizations, which allowed the space for foreign participation in the establishment of children’s libraries in Japan.

**Following in the Footsteps of American Children’s Libraries**

To Ishii, children’s libraries were an essential part of children’s literature that existed in a number of foreign countries but was lacking in Japan. *Kodomo no toshokan* provides a general overview of Ishii’s thoughts about children’s libraries in the latter sections of the book, in which

\textsuperscript{183} Ishii, *Kodomo no toshokan*, 7.

\textsuperscript{184} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{186} Ishii, *Kodomo no toshokan*, 24.
she mostly describes the state and history of children’s libraries in the U.S., Canada, and Britain. She argues,

in order to solve the problems of children’s reading in Japan, the people who write books and those who make and sell books have a lot of things that they still need to learn. As an institution that provides them with direction, the children’s library (or perhaps a children’s room in a public library), which is a place for children to enjoy reading, is hardly something that can be done without.  

This clearly shows how much importance Ishii placed on the role of the library in shaping children’s literature. The children’s library, in Ishii’s mind, served a double function; as much as the library was a place for children to read books, it was a place for adults to study those children. This conceptualization of the children’s library was definitely an influence of her time in the U.S. and what is going unnoticed is the fact that such a double function also has double-sided effects. As much as adults learn about children through the library, the children are actually shaped and guided by the adults and the library system. Even in the small home library in Ishii’s residence, children learned to become a certain type of users of libraries and readers of books collected in them, but when public children’s libraries were established all over the country, they became an institution and gained more power to instruct their users. In other words, the larger the institution of children’s libraries became, the more normalized its child users became.

Ishii was not satisfied with Japan’s institutions regarding children which she believed to be inferior to those of foreign countries. She provides a recollection of a time when a woman from New Zealand’s Ministry of Education visited Katsura Bunko, to support her argument that childhood education in Japan is not up to par with the universal “norm.” The woman complained to Ishii that, from what she had seen of Japanese elementary schools, Japanese schoolchildren were made to study for entrance examinations at an age when they should be allowed to use their creative powers to search for what they enjoy. She praised Ishii’s library for allowing children

\[187\] Ibid., 187.
\[188\] Ibid., 188.
to freely choose the books they want to read.\textsuperscript{189} This concept of childhood is much like the one Lillian H. Smith portrays in her book. Ishii comments, “I think that any normal person would feel in that way.”\textsuperscript{190} It is already meaningful that Ishii chose to use the viewpoint of a foreigner to begin the discussion of children’s libraries in Japan, but to describe the viewpoint as that of a “normal (\textit{futsu})” person quite literally normalizes that concept of the child. In this way, Ishii begins the discussion of children’s libraries by establishing Japan as the abnormal and the foreign (or more specifically the Anglophone West) as the normal, whose example should be followed.

Ishii believed that the Japanese government should be more involved in creating more spaces for children like the children’s library. She argues, “just as children from any household have become able to go to school by national regulation, places where children can play and places where children can read freely should also have been established by the nation.”\textsuperscript{191} However, as mentioned earlier, the reality was that there was little recognition of the need for such spaces, which was a main reason she began a library of her own in an attempt to put it into practice and generate awareness. She was aware of the limitations of home libraries, which were private small-scale libraries often located within households and operated once or twice a week. Being located in private residences limited the number of days that the space could be opened to the public, and because they were privately funded by individuals, it would have been difficult to hire someone to assist in running the library, having to rely on volunteers. Because of these limitations, Ishii considered her own library only a step toward the establishment of public libraries, which would be funded and administrated by the local government and open most days in a year, allowing children easier and more frequent access to books at libraries managed by professional librarians. Katsura Bunko was essentially an experiment, not a goal. Her goal of creating public libraries only had its initial success in 1974, when four home libraries, including Katsura Bunko, was merged into one library called Tōkyō Kodomo Toshokan (Tokyo Children's Library), which was approved as an incorporated foundation by the Tokyo Metropolitan Board

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., 189.
\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., 190.
of Education. However, this library was not government operated, and it was only five years later in 1979 when the public city-owned children’s libraries began to appear. This was over twenty years after Ishii first began Katsura Bunko in 1958. The process was long but she was able to generate awareness and succeed in making children’s libraries into a public institution regulated through a close network of librarians across the country, by slowly working toward the library system she observed in America.

Anne Carroll Moore provided a model for how a library system could be established at a national scale. Ishii describes in *Kodomo no toshokan* how, before meeting Moore in person, she visited many children’s libraries in different cities in the U.S. and heard all the librarians talk about “Miss Moore” as a personal acquaintance. 192 She saw that American libraries were organized into a close network at an unimaginable scale, and that most children’s librarians were personally trained by Moore. 193 Seeing the system that Moore created and learning of the work that she had done up to that point gave Ishii a clear idea of the process that would be required to create a similar organized network of children’s libraries in Japan, not only in terms of creating the space, but also training librarians specialized in children’s books. It is noteworthy that Ishii mentions that Moore was very active in teaching people from countries outside the U.S. about children’s libraries. She had taught people from Norway, France, and Germany, and Sweden, contributing to the movement for children’s libraries in those countries. 194 The system of children’s libraries that Ishii saw in the U.S. was something that originated in America and was expanding outwards into other countries, which she would ultimately help expand into Japan.

Although establishing such a network in Japan was no doubt a well-intended endeavour to provide children with easy access to books, it had another function of institutionalizing reading itself. The network created by the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai through publications and support for other home libraries had already begun to normalize standards of book selection and library management which were transferred to public libraries, which meant that children’s libraries

192 Ibid., 193.
193 Ibid., 194.
194 Ibid.
around the country could be managed with similar standards even in the early stages of their establishment. The normalized standards of the libraries would begin to have great influence on publishing and writing, quite simply for the reason that publishers would want to publish books that libraries are likely to decide to purchase. In Chapter 1, it was mentioned that the author’s subjectivity was driven out of children’s literature by normalizing the image of the child. The institutionalization of children’s libraries played a facilitative role in this by solidifying that image of the child and indirectly controlling what was written and published.

Another effect of attempting to mimic the actions that were taken by American librarians in establishing children’s libraries was positioning the U.S. as the forerunner and the authority of children’s libraries in the minds of the people who were interested in working in children’s libraries in Japan. By introducing Moore and other pioneers of children’s libraries such as Caroline Hewins (1846-1927, an American librarian) and Lillian H. Smith in *Kodomo to bungaku*, Ishii made it very clear that her ideas about the children’s library had precedents in North America. This U.S.-centered view of the development of children’s libraries persists to this day. A set of two books published by the Japan Library Association (JLA) in 2011, *Jidō toshokan sābisu 1* and 2 (official English title, Public Library Service to Children 1 and 2), which are part of the JLA Monograph Series for Library Practitioners, are detailed manuals that introduce all facets of children's library service. In this book, the section about the history of children’s libraries begins with Britain and America, introducing the likes of Moore, Hewins, and Smith, as well as Eileen Colwell. One may argue that since it is true that Britain and the U.S. had established children’s libraries much earlier, it would make sense to begin a discussion of its history with those countries. However, presenting the history in this way has the consequence of placing the cultural history of Japan on a linear path originating in Britain and the U.S., which renders Japan’s cultural identity as one that is lagging behind and following the lead of those countries.

A 2006 book about children’s libraries by Takawashi Yukiko, *Kodomo to hon no kakehashi ni: Jidō toshokan ni dekiru koto* (As a bridge between children and books: What children’s libraries can do), presents the history in much the same way, beginning with North America and
mentioning the same names of important contributors.\textsuperscript{195} This indicates that this has become a standard way of writing the history of children’s libraries in Japan. What is important to note is that Ishii, through books such as \textit{Kodomo no toshokan}, played a leading role in disseminating the history of American and British children’s libraries to the Japanese public. Ishii was the first Japanese person to make personal acquaintance with the figures written in this history and to write in detail about their work. The means that she had through the Rockefeller Foundation’s Creative Fellowship to travel to the U.S., Canada, and Britain and come into contact with those figures allowed her to not only gain knowledge of their work but also become part of their network as friend and pupil.

It cannot be denied that there were many people other than Ishii learning from and disseminating American ideas and history of children's libraries. Librarians such as Tomono Reiko (translator of Harriet G. Long’s \textit{Rich the Treasure: Public Library Service to Children}\textsuperscript{196}), Watanabe Shigeo (1928-2006, a co-author of \textit{Kodomo to bungaku} and a translator of Lillian H. Smith’s aforementioned book), Masaki Ruriko (born in 1937, member of Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai and translator of children’s stories), and Matsuoka Kyōko\textsuperscript{197} (born in 1935, chief director of Tōkyō Kodomo Toshokan since its founding in 1974 until 2015) had all studied in the U.S. under various different scholarships during the 50s and 60s and undertook the work of disseminating knowledge about American children’s libraries.\textsuperscript{198} In \textit{Jidō toshokan sābisu}, the section on the history of children’s libraries in Japan begins with the statement, “since the Meiji Restoration, within the trend of gaining knowledge of the West, the people who learned of the work of public libraries and children’s libraries in Britain and America advocated the need for them in Japan.”\textsuperscript{199} It also states that while the information of children's libraries existed among a few

\textsuperscript{195} Takawashi Yukiko, \textit{Kodomo to hon no kakehashi ni: Jidō toshokan ni dekiru koto} (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 2006), 28-38.


\textsuperscript{197} Matsuoka also began a home library in 1967 called Matsu no Mi Bunko, which was one of the four libraries that became Tōkyō Kodomo Toshokan.

\textsuperscript{198} Shiozaki, “Jidō toshokan no rekishi,” 37.

\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 33.
intellectuals, they never became a reality during Meiji Japan (1868-1912). It is quite clear that children’s libraries in the West had been known in Japan long before Ishii and the above librarians began their work in the field, and a few children’s libraries did exist in prewar Japan. However, the scale of the changes that occurred since the end of the Second World War can be attributed to the specific conditions of haisenkoku Japan that opened up opportunities to study librarianship in America.

Not only did the people mentioned above share the experience of studying in America, three of them were affiliated with the Toshokan Gakka (Library Science Department) at Keio Gijuku University (Masaki and Matsuoka as students and Watanabe as a faculty member), the first library science program in Japan. Matsuda Takeshi states that the program “was established under SCAP auspices...[and] Japanese participants were taught the most advanced U.S. techniques and methods in library science.”

This program, which still exists today as Library and Information Science at Keio University, acted as the hub from which many of the most important figures in the development of children’s libraries in Japan were educated. In other words, the political endeavours of the U.S. had directly influenced and trained many of the leading librarians of postwar Japan. The idea of the children’s library that had existed in the minds of intellectuals since Meiji was finally institutionalized by the U.S., and people such as Masaki and Matsuoka who wished to work for the establishment of children’s libraries could be taken seriously since they had been educated at American institutions. In a way, the power, finances, and authority of the U.S. were utilized to legitimate the work of establishing children’s libraries. It was under these circumstances that Ishii’s ideas and instructions could gain support, and it is no surprise that those same circumstances led to a children’s library system in Japan that identifies its own origin in Britain and America. Edward Said states that

> the intelligentsia itself is auxiliary to what it considers to be the main trends stamped out in the West. Its role has been prescribed and set for it as a “modernizing” one, which

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means that it gives legitimacy and authority to ideas about modernization, progress, and culture that it receives from the United States for the most part.201

Ishii, and the other founders of children’s libraries mentioned, played the role of the intelligentsia in giving Western ideas about children’s literature legitimacy and authority.

One way to think about the establishment of children’s libraries in Japan is as a mimicry of American children’s libraries. Ishii was herself mimicking the American, Canadian, and British pioneers of children’s libraries, and she advocated others to do the same. A key point here is that Ishii believed that she was mimicking the “correct” way, based on universal truths about children. This belief in the universal standards is a key aspect in Ishii’s mimicry that hides and even allows for the ignoring of the cultural differences between nations. This mimicry based on the ideology of the universal is significantly different from Homi Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry. Homi Bhabha states that “colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference.”202 One way to interpret this statement by Bhabha is, while on the surface, mimicry is a kind of striving for similarity, it ultimately accentuates difference, because, for instance, “to be Anglicized is emphatically not to be English.”203 Ishii’s mimicry is devoid of the ambivalence or desire for difference because she presented the model for her mimicry as the “norm,” from which Japan was deviant. This is why the term “universal standard” is used in the introduction of Kodomo to bungaku rather than “American standard” or “Western standard.” Just as the discourse of the “real child” obscured the culture specific concepts of the child reader, the presumed universality of the American system of children’s libraries obscured the differences between American and Japanese children as users of libraries, preventing the detection of ambivalence between the mimicry and the

201 Said, Orientalism, 325.
202 Homi K. Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 2004), 122. Italics in original.
203 Ibid., 125.
original. Through the belief in the universal child, Ishii’s mimicry erased its own characteristic of copying and generated a semblance of progress.

The people running home libraries in Japan who read *Kodomo no toshokan* and used it as a guide would have been induced to model their services after American libraries without any direct contact or exposure and without any intent to do so, since their intent is to model Ishii, not the American libraries. This is a kind of inadvertent mimicry of the U.S. that was made possible by the decision of Fahs and the Rockefeller Foundation to invite Ishii to the U.S. and provide her with opportunities to learn and disseminate knowledge about American children’s libraries and literature. The knowledge that was mediated by Ishii not only influenced librarians into an inadvertent mimicry but also in the children who used the libraries. However, in the case of children the process is even more manipulative and invisible. Children were viewed by the adults as naturally reacting to the environment and using the libraries in their own way, but as discussed before, the children were educated and institutionalized by the normalized system of libraries, meaning that they learned to behave as users of this specific system. As a result, they inadvertently mimicked American child users of children’s libraries. This creates a culture that is essentially a mimicry without any recognition of it being so. This is a discreet form of acculturation that leads to a discreet mimicry without the recognition of the ambivalence existing in the international relationships at its source. These processes developed a culture of distributing and reading children’s books in Japan that is a direct derivation of an American precedent.

**The Children of Ishii’s Libraries**

It is the establishment of the library that gives rise to a concept of its users. This process is similar to the one Karatani Kojin discusses in “The Discovery of the Child.” In discussing the *dōwa* tradition criticism, which, as we saw earlier, argued that Ogawa Mimei’s stories were not written for the “real child,” Karatani states,

> Inokuma [Yōko, a scholar of children’s literature] asserts that the child in Ogawa Mimei’s stories is no more than an inversion when considered from the viewpoint of “real children.” Yet while it may be perfectly true that the children in Mimei’s stories were produced through a certain internal inversion, what we call “the child” was itself
discovered through such an inversion, and it was only after this that “real children” or “realistic children” could be seen. To critique the inversion in Mimei’s children when compared with “real children” serves merely to obscure the nature of this inversion rather than to elucidate it.²⁰⁴

This inversion of thought is also quite important in the discussion of children’s libraries because just as the real or realistic children in terms of literature, especially as readers, were discovered through conceptualizing and writing literature for children, the children with independent characteristics and human rights that the children’s library is said to require were also discovered, or rather constructed, through the conceptualization and establishment of children’s libraries. Simply put, the concept of children as readers and users of libraries follow an inversion of thought performed by adults in imagining the ideal child in respect to their own creations. What this means is that, while the independence, rights, and abilities of children were actually being shaped by the institution of the library, it was believed (by the librarians themselves) that the institution was shaped by children.

In Ishii’s case, she applied a concept of children’s library users established in America to a developing concept of children’s libraries in Japan even before they were founded, and her concept of the children’s library imposed a model of its users unto Japanese children. A passage in Jidō toshokan sābisu presents the key aspects of the child users of libraries.

In order to trace the origin and history of children’s libraries, which provides materials and information for child users, it is necessary to focus on “the child.” Firstly, it needs to be recognized that children are beings who have independent characteristics and human rights at each stage of development and that they are irreplaceable individuals. Secondly, with that as a prerequisite, the recognition has to be established that it is the responsibility of the entire society to guarantee them the opportunity to read, which is an undeniable necessity for children, as well as to make sure that each child is qualified and able as a

user and that materials are sufficiently provided and organized. This is the condition necessary for the establishment of children’s libraries.\textsuperscript{205}

The “entire society” in the passage seems to mean “adults” because the notions of the independent and irreplaceable child as well as the responsibilities of society are issues of adult perception. The idea that such perceptions are prerequisites for the establishment of children’s libraries does not take into account that the library itself also influences perceptions. Ensuring that “each child is qualified and able as a user [\textit{hitori hitori no kodomo ga riyōsha toshite shikaku to nōryoku wo motsu koto}]\textsuperscript{206} requires a knowledge of what qualifications and abilities are necessary for children to become users of libraries. That knowledge developed in America through the process of building a library service for American children, which means that for those same prerequisites to be met, Japanese children are required to resemble American children in their qualifications and abilities that are also compulsory to the aforementioned rights and responsibilities of the user. As the belief in the objective existence of “real children” obliterates the process of the construction of the concept of the child, as Karatani rightly observes, a belief in the ability for a society to create children that have the rights and the ability to be users of children’s libraries even before they are established obscures the role that the children’s libraries themselves play in instructing those conceptual characteristics to children.

It seems that Ishii was not aware that her vision of children’s libraries was invested with American ideologies regarding the child user, and that she was viewing Japanese children through the lens of those ideologies. It was mentioned earlier in this chapter that she had found her ideal readers of children’s literature at her home library in Tokyo. The image of her ideal reader can be identified through her comments about the difference between children in the countryside and children in the city. In \textit{Kodomo no dokusho no michibiki kata}, she expresses an almost discriminatory view of countryside children as she describes her meeting with children of the school in W village. Ishii writes, “when I first went to the school, blackish children were huddled in a mass as if by force near the entrance in the wide schoolyard that was muddy like a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[205] Shiozaki, “Jidō toshokan no rekishi,” 27.
\item[206] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
Shimizu Masako comments on this passage that “it is understandable that the children of the farm village had seemed to Ishii like a ‘little pitch dark crowd’ that does not even have ‘human skin,’” since she was looking in Japan for a figure resembling that of children she saw in America, Canada, and Britain. The first thing that Ishii noticed about the children was their colour. While it would be farfetched to suggest any racial undercurrents in this description, she was definitely comparing the colour of these children to the colour of children that she was used to, namely those of Tokyo as well as North America and Britain. Her description seems a deliberate scheme to characterize the children of the village as distinctly inferior to city children as readers and users of libraries.

The same description of seeing the schoolchildren for the first time can be found in the end of *Kodomo no toshokan* in the section titled “Nōson no kodomo to hon wo yomu (Reading books with rural village children),” which was added to the book in the new version published in 1999. In this edition, many parts of the passage were rewritten and some of the discriminatory remarks were edited out. The scene of Ishii looking on at the children during the morning assembly is described like this: “looking from my position as I entered the gate, they were all suntanned to a brown colour, and the only things that looked like human skin were the face of the principal standing on top of the podium and the faces of the teachers standing in line to his side. The students were all facing away from me, huddled into a small black lump.” Whether Ishii had read Shimizu’s text, which was published a year before in 1998, is uncertain. However, the phrases that Shimizu highlights have been given a new context or revised. The words “suntanned” was added to explain the reason for the children’s dark colour, and a specific viewpoint of being near the school gate explains that she was far away from the children and looking on. Perhaps more significantly, the phrase “small pitch dark crowd (*dosuguroi chīsai gunshū*)” is changed to “small black lump (*kuroi chīsai katamari*)” and the image of the children

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208 Shimizu, *Kodomo no hon no genzai*, 35.

209 Ishii, *Kodomo no toshokan*, 266.
facing away from Ishii is added. The negative connotations of dosuguroi and the social implications of the word gunshū, which is used sometimes to refer to a “mass,” conveyed much stronger a sense of negative difference that was felt by Ishii toward a specific type of people. In the new version, the description clearly suggests that the image that Ishii sees is due to where she is standing, and the image itself is described with words that do not have strong connotations or implications. While these changes do erase some of the discriminatory viewpoints that were evident in the language, they still cannot change the perspective that Ishii had toward the children, which is that of difference.

In that same section in Kodomo no toshokan, Ishii writes the surprise she felt at how small the children looked to her at first. Discerning from only their size, she initially thought that all the children were first to third graders even though students up to sixth graders were present, and she went as far as to ask the teachers to show her a chart of the national average for body size of schoolchildren to see if the children of this village were smaller than normal, only to find that they were no different from the rest of Japan. 210 This focus and emphasis on her own perception of difference is also a kind of discrimination against a Japanese Other, separating the urban from the rural, which can also be thought of in terms of the modern from the pre-modern. When Ishii saw the textbooks that the village school was using, she noticed phrases like “soko de kangaerareru koto wa (what we can deduce from this),” which she feels is a European style of writing, and makes the comment that “when heard in Tokyo, this kind of language does not seem so strange, but when it is pronounced in front of children who are darkly tanned it sounded like a foreign language.” 211 In other words, what may be foreign to the countryside is not for the city. Ishii attributes the foreignness to the skin colour but not the accent that the children would have spoken in. The textbooks would have been written in hyōjyungo (the standard language used in Tokyo), and the awkwardness of reading from those textbooks in the Miyagi accent would have had the effect of mimicry that accentuates differences between countryside children and city children. Ishii’s focus on visible, physical differences deemphasizes cultural differences, emphasizing the physical attribute of what is perceived as “foreign.” Furthermore, although the

210 Ibid., 266-67.
211 Ibid., 267.
word foreign (gaikoku) is used for the language that may be used naturally in a city, the effect of the usage of that word is to reverse that foreignness and give the children of the countryside foreign characteristics. Rural children become foreign to the city children. This is another kind of inversion that gives non-modern aspects of Japan the characteristics of the Other, the foreign, and the deviation from the norm.

Thinking about the ideal user of children’s libraries once again, children living in Tokyo, by virtue of being imagined more similar to children of the West, were closer to Ishii’s ideal users than children living in the countryside. This is why Ishii decided to begin her library in Tokyo. However, this does not mean that Tokyo children were able to become proficient users of Ishii’s library right away, nor does it mean that Ishii’s library was designed for them. One third of Kodomo no toshokan is devoted to describing in detail the experiences of the children who come to Katsura Bunko as observed by Ishii and other adults working there. With each child, the book essentially attempts to give the reader an example of how a child, who does not have any concept of libraries in the beginning, can learn to use the library in the correct way. For example, there is a description of a three-year-old named Ben-chan who wanted to borrow a lot of books. A female helper of the library spent thirty minutes to convince him that only three books could be borrowed by one person at one time.\(^{212}\) Ishii states that after this, “he was able to act as an independent full-fledged member of the library.”\(^{213}\) In episodes such as this, it seems that Ishii’s library worked hard to instill independence and equality—key concepts of democracy as promoted by the United States. The children learned not only how to use the library but also how to be an individual member of an institution.

Conclusion

It was because Kodomo no toshokan was so influential, and the Katei Bunko Kenkyū Kai created a network of home libraries for children, Ishii’s methods of training children to be ideal users of

\(^{212}\) Ibid., 67.

\(^{213}\) Ibid.
libraries could be mimicked in many parts of Japan, including the countryside. An interesting phenomenon can be imagined from this. Through the proliferation of home libraries, the children in the countryside like in the Miyagi Prefecture village that did not fit Ishii’s image of the users of children’s libraries or the readers of children’s literature were able to gain the same kind of training of becoming a member of a library. Through this process, children living in different parts of Japan were able to gain a normalized education in using libraries and being a member of an institution. It took about fifteen years after the publication of *Kodomo to bungaku* for public children’s libraries to be established across Japan, and in the history of children’s libraries the focus is usually given to how the home libraries provided a model and an impetus for public libraries. However, it may be more important to think about how the home libraries incited changes in children, which is a bigger reason why public children’s libraries could be established—because its forerunning users already existed. In an overview, Ishii’s mimicry of Western children’s libraries led to a nationwide mimicry of Ishii’s library, which induced the “small pitch dark crowd” of Japanese children to inadvertently mimic American child users of libraries, contributing to the acculturation of Japanese children to the U.S., molding them into modern subjects based on a model mediated by Ishii Momoko.
Defining a Genre: A Conclusion

The founders of contemporary Japanese children’s literature who initiated the discourse for a new model of children’s literature in the 50s were all children during wartime or prewar Japan. The children’s literature they envisioned for the children of postwar Japan was very different from the one they experienced as shōkokumin of the Empire of Japan. This thesis attempted to show that they searched for a new model of children’s literature in foreign cultures, and due to the channels of cultural exchange that were available through the U.S.-Japan relations in the postwar period, that model was derived predominantly from Anglophone culture. As a result, postwar Japanese children’s literature was different in style and content from the prewar tradition of dōwa. Standardization of novel-length children’s books that focus on providing the reader with pleasure replaced dōwa’s short stories that focused on literary expression. This reconstruction of the genre was possible because children’s literature is defined by its readers, and as the ideologies regarding the readership changes, so does the characteristics of the genre. A study that compares prewar and postwar works of children’s literature through close reading would be necessary to come to a comprehensive understanding of how different ideologies of different historical moments are reflected in the text. However, this study of Ishii’s career is enough to show that the child reader of prewar and postwar children’s literature are different concepts arising from different ideologies. Future research on Japanese children’s literature should be based on an awareness of such differences in the conceptualization of the child reader that foster differing procedures and operations because “Japanese children’s literature” has been defined and characterized differently according to the prevalent ideology of the historical moment under which they were written, translated, published, distributed, and read.

This thesis focused on one specific historical period, when rapid socio-political developments of haisenkoku Japan led to one of the most significant turning points in the history of children’s literature. However, ideologies regarding children have undergone many changes during the modern history of Japan, and the close relationship between social developments and children’s literature is evident throughout that history. During the Meiji period, the imperial government enacted the Constitution of the Empire of Japan in 1890 and introduced the idea of the shōkokumin as part of the nation building effort. In 1891, Iwaya Sazanami published a fairy tale called Koganemaru, which he introduced as shōnen bungaku (juvenile literature). Iwaya’s story is often considered the first work of Japanese children’s literature by literary historians and it
began a trend of children’s stories called *otogibanashi* (fairy tale), which lasted until the advent of *dōwa* in the Taishō period. Just as the enactment of the constitution shaped the identity of Japan as a nation, Iwaya’s introduction of *shōnen bungaku* shaped the identity of the child reader. The timeliness of the awareness of a literature for children only one year after the enactment of the constitution suggests that it was initiated by new concepts of childhood arising from the new concepts of the nation. A possible topic of future research is the process through which Iwaya conceptualized children’s literature in comparison with Ishii’s work in postwar Japan.

Iwaya’s term *shōnen bungaku* was taken from a German term *jugendschrift* (youth literature), which indicates that the idea of a literature for children was borrowed from a foreign origin even in Meiji Japan. The concept of literature for children in Japan was built on an awareness of existing concepts of children’s literature in foreign countries, and as we can see from the Anglophone influence on postwar Japanese children’s literature, foreign ideas continued to have an impact even after the concept had been established. For this reason, the development of children’s literature in Japan can be better understood within the context of international relations than in isolation. The same can be said of the concept of the reader. The concept of the Japanese child is continuously evolving through international exchange of cultural ideas, and as it was discussed with respect to children’s libraries, services and institutions geared toward children can also contribute to shaping the concept. In other words, the identity of the Japanese child is a composite of the concepts of the child as a reader of literature, user of libraries, member of institutions, and recipient as well as producers of culture—all of which are continually changing. In a study of children’s literature, restricting the concept of the child to one dominant model existent at a specific time and place can lead to misunderstandings and misrepresentations of the works being analyzed if they were not written by an author who holds a similar concept, just as *Kodom o to bungaku* presented criticisms of Mimei without accounting for differences in concepts of the child reader. Japanese children’s literature is yet to become a significant field in English language scholarship, and it is important in the early stages of the field’s development to present a correct understanding of the nature of the genre—that it changes form according to the concurrent concept of the child, which always arises from an international context—because beginnings (and childhoods) are foundations for the future.
Bibliography


