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Citation

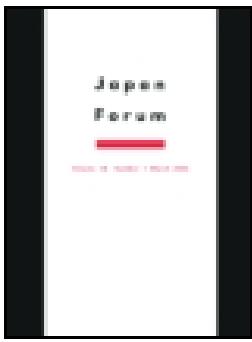
Ewijk, A. van. (2023). Premodern warriors as spirited young citizens:: Iwaya Sazanami and the semiosphere of Meiji youth literature. *Japan Forum*, 35(3), 344-366.
doi:10.1080/09555803.2021.2008471

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3487304>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



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To cite this article: Aafke van Ewijk (2021): Premodern Warriors as Spirited Young Citizens: Iwaya Sazanami and The Semiosphere of Meiji Youth Literature, Japan Forum, DOI: [10.1080/09555803.2021.2008471](https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2021.2008471)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2021.2008471>



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Published online: 03 Dec 2021.



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Premodern Warriors as Spirited Young Citizens: Iwaya Sazanami and The Semiosphere of Meiji Youth Literature

AAFKE VAN EWIJK 

Youth literature of the Meiji period (1868–1912) has been portrayed as moralistic and unable to overcome premodern literary styles and tropes. However, in this article I show how this literature was transformative and functioned as an arena within which literary writers and the government contended for the minds of young Japanese citizens. I reexamine the early development of the genre of youth literature in Japan through the lens of Juri Lotman’s theory of cultural memory. In Lotman’s spatial model of culture, or semiosphere, foreign concepts travel from the periphery to the centre of a given cultural (sub)sphere through an amalgamation with established texts, in a process of ‘creative memory’. This process, I argue, is reflected in the serialized adaptations of premodern warrior legends by the pioneering author Iwaya Sazanami (1870–1933), in which he explores the conventions of nineteenth-century youth literature from the West. Recognizing the new genre’s deep connection to citizenship, he shaped his protagonists into exemplary boys who display *wanpaku* (spirited) dispositions, in opposition to the moralism and ‘narrow-minded nationalism’ imparted at home and in schools. As a mediator between premodern and modern concepts and modes of text production, Meiji youth literature thus offered adults a way to develop modern identities.

Keywords: Meiji period, citizenship, nationalism, semiosphere, youth literature, historical fiction, exemplars, Hakubunkan, Iwaya Sazanami

Introduction

‘The timidity of Japanese children is beyond comparison’, the author Iwaya Sazanami (1870–1933) complained in 1899.¹ Iwaya, who had established

Japan Forum, 2021

Vol. 0, No. 0, 1–23, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09555803.2021.2008471>

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himself as an author of youth literature during the preceding years, took part in a debate on young citizens. In the 1890s, both the Japanese government and commercial publishers pursued the relatively new goal of shaping the minds of young, in practice, predominantly male Japanese citizens. While the still young government devised a national curriculum, publishers and authors ventured into the new genre of youth literature being introduced from the West. Iwaya, who worked for the successful Tokyo-based publishing house Hakubunkan, envisioned a Japan that would broaden its horizon and give up its 'passive disposition of an island nation'. According to Iwaya, the timidity of boys was caused by the curbing in schools and at home of their spirited nature. Instead, they should - at least at home - have more freedom and be provided with stories that stimulate their imagination.

Between 1894 and 1899, at the request of Hakubunkan, Iwaya wrote two book series aimed at primary-school aged children: *Nippon mukashibanashi* and *Nippon otogibanashi*, each consisting of twenty-four volumes. Both titles can be translated as 'Japanese folktales' or 'Japanese fairy tales'. *Nippon mukashibanashi* started out as a Japanese counterpart to Western fairy tales. The twenty-third volume marks a pivotal moment in the series as it represents a 'fairy tale' about a historical figure: the twelfth-century general Minamoto Yoshitsune (1159–1189). *Nippon otogibanashi* expands on this idea and takes up legends and biographies of famous historical generals whose (boyhood) adventures are rewritten through the lens of Iwaya's ideals.

The material for Iwaya's stories about historical generals originated in early modern popular culture. Meiji period (1868–1912) explorations into the genre of youth literature have been characterized negatively as unable to overcome premodern plots and language, exemplified by Iwaya's early work *Koganemaru* (1891) (Karatani 1993, Koyama-Siebert 2015). Carol Gluck observes that by the 1890s, the Edo period (1603–1868) was perceived of as the inverse of civilization, yet also provided 'usable national parts' in the narrative of the modern Meiji state (Gluck 1998, 266). Children's literature was an attractive genre for treasuring Edo period traditions, as it was modern and educational, yet the idea of a child audience allowed for some naiveté. This article will consider the relationship between early modern popular texts and the concept of youth literature (as it existed in the nineteenth century) as a process of creating new meaning. By applying Juri Lotman's spatial model of culture, or semiosphere, this article aims to shed light on the role of Edo period texts in 'creative memory' during the Meiji period. I will ask how Iwaya applied the codes of Western children's literature to premodern warrior legends, and gave shape to his ideal young citizen, at variance with the government's visions. A prerequisite for this interpretation is that 'children's literature' is taken as texts that were explicitly published under this banner, rather than adopting Karatani Kōjin's view that 'children's literature' could not precede 'literature' (Karatani 1993, 117).

Most texts produced for children in the past and present are primarily didactic and consist of what adults imagine as appropriate for children (Nodelman 2008, 150–155).

The following paragraphs will first introduce Juri Lotman's theory on cultural memory and the semiosphere, which will provide a framework for analysis of the re-coding of early modern popular texts as children's literature in Iwaya's book series *Nippon mukashibanashi* and *Nippon otogibanashi*. Next, I will discuss the visions of the Japanese government on young citizens as expressed through educational policies and textbooks of the 1890s, the ideological tendency of Hakubunkan's magazines and history series for youth in this same period, and Iwaya's personal understanding of the new genre of children's literature. This will be followed by an analysis of two volumes from the above-mentioned series: *Ushiwakamaru* (volume 23 of *Nippon mukashibanashi*, 1894) and *Hiyoshimaru* (volume 16 of *Nippon otogibanashi*, 1898), respectively introducing Minamoto Yoshitsune and Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598).

Juri Lotman's model of the semiosphere and cultural memory

The work of Juri Lotman (1922–1993) is renowned in the field of semiotics and literary studies, yet his theory of cultural memory has hardly found its way into Anglo-American memory studies. Lotman's perception of cultural memory should be understood within his spatial model of culture, the semiosphere. The semiosphere is a mechanism in which 'communicative processes and the creation of new information' take place, outside of which semiosis cannot exist (Lotman and Clark 2005, 207–208). Inherent in the semiosphere and its sub-systems are peripheries in which external communications translate into the semiosphere's internal language and in which texts are re-assessed in the light of the new concepts (Lotman and Clark 2005, 210). The introduction of youth literature into the Japanese cultural sphere and the shifts in literary categories can be understood as semiotic processes taking place in this periphery. These processes can be conceived of as interrelated, but also at variance with, processes in other strata, for example in 'high literature' or education.²

The semiosphere is essentially a model of constant text generation, and cultural memory has an active role in the creation of new texts. Lotman distinguishes between 'informative memory' and 'creative memory', although in practice these are not strictly separated. 'Informative memory' develops in a linear way: the 'active' text (in technology for example) is the result of the latest knowledge. 'Creative memory' rather refers to 'an entire cluster of texts [that] turns out to be potentially active' and resists time, in that it 'preserves the past as an inhabitant of the present' (Lotman 2019a, 134–135). This type of memory applies for example to art (in the wide sense). Lotman conceptualizes

cultural memory not as ‘a storehouse but as a mechanism for its regeneration’ (Lotman 2019b, 143). This is a conceptual difference with Aleida Assmann’s notion of the ‘archive’ (Assmann 2010, 99). Within the process of creative memory, early modern popular culture is tied to perpetual updating of texts, triggered by contact with other texts.

The productivity of meaning generation depends on the extent of the semi-otic shift that occurs (Lotman 2019a, 136). When there is a massive influx into a culture of texts that are structured very differently from the receiving culture, as happened in Japan during the Meiji period, and the internal tradition of a culture has no adequate codes for deciphering them, a rift opens between cultural memory and its mechanisms of text generation. In other words, Lotman considers history not a succession of periods, but a dialogical model in which periods alternate between destabilization and rapid development, or ‘explosion’ (Semenenko 2012, 66). Such an ‘explosion’ is preceded by a period of reception. This was also the case for Western youth literature in the early Meiji period, that was mainly introduced in the form of translation (see Wakabayashi 2008). The 1890s saw a very rapid and productive phase in the generation of texts that translated internal texts and codes to those of the new genre.

Early modern texts and/in creative memory

Iwaya operated within the context of kabuki, ukiyo-e, public storytelling, and other forms of popular performance and print. The art historian Yamanashi Toshio describes the correlation between these different media as a ‘cycle’ that is structured by the concepts of *sekai* (the dramatic world consisting of well-known events, legends, and characters), *shukō* (the plot of a new text) and *kata* (conventions and patterns specific to the medium) (Yamanashi 2005, 131–133). If a new text fitted within the patterns of expectation, it could be understood and appreciated, independent from historical time or truth. This ‘cycle’ resembles a semiosphere, to which the codes of youth literature were foreign. Yet this cycle also offered material that could help to translate the new codes. Lotman argues that ‘symbols’ ‘carry over text, plotlines, and other semi-otic formations from one cultural stratum to another’, which has a unifying function (Lotman 2019c, 163). The symbol can be a person or literary character, such as Hamlet, who ‘has come to function as a conventional sign, the meaning of which can vary in time and which is subject to continual change’ (Semenenko 2012, 105). Such symbols have certain stable features that cause them to not disintegrate. This also applies to the protagonists of Japanese pre-modern warrior legends. The representation of Yoshitsune depends on context, yet most representations include the semantic field of the underdog or tragic hero (not unlike Hamlet), and a selection of icons or plots associated with Yoshitsune. For example, the warrior monk Benkei as antithesis. The concept

of *sekai* entailed moreover a deliberate technique that led to a rich body of symbols that continued to exert a unifying function in the Meiji period.

For the generation that grew up in the early Meiji period, and their (grand)-parents who grew up in the Edo period, warrior legends belonged to the reading and listening experiences of their youth (Katō 1998, 275–277). Up to the 1880s, folktales and warrior legends were a popular theme in *kusazōshi*, a picture-oriented genre written in the vernacular. Iwaya relied on such printed sources and his memory for his adaptations, according to his ‘message to the young reader’ in *Momotarō* (‘Peach Boy’, 1894) (Iwaya 2001, 13). Yoshitsune was also frequently represented in uncomplicated *kusazōshi* aimed at children. These booklets stood in the tradition of *musha-e-hon* (‘warrior picture books’), in which every page (or spread) shows a famous episode associated with the hero, largely consisting of established iconography, and a cursory text. In the 1880s, *kusazōshi* innovated at a technological level by replacing woodblock printing with copperplate printing. Such *kusazōshi* do not, however, reflect any new insights into the nature of children, or into the codes of ‘youth literature’. Although accessible and entertaining, the booklets do not eschew graphic violence, nor adapt the narrative to accommodate identification with a young protagonist, as Iwaya would do.

Youth literature, unlike *kusazōshi*, aimed to socialize children into good citizens, and keep them apart from certain aspects of adult life. As argued by Philippe Ariès ([1962] 1993), schooling is an influential practice that separated children from adults. In contrast to early modern Japanese education practices, the compulsory education system was bound to the nation-state and uprooted children ‘as abstract and homogeneous entities, from the productive relations, social classes, and communities that had previously been their concrete contexts’ (Karatani 1993, 132). The modern primary school made it possible to envisage children as young citizens and a group in society that needs special treatment. Narratives of historical figures were developed as a modern didactic device.

Government visions of young citizens and exemplars in the 1890s

In Japan, compulsory education was introduced in 1872, with the promulgation of the Fundamental Code on Education (*Gakusei*). However, school attendance only started to rise significantly some twenty years later.³ In 1890, the government’s efforts to formulate a shared ethos as well as the underlying principles of Japanese education culminated in the Imperial Rescript on Education (*Kyōiku ni kansuru chokugo*). The Rescript stressed Confucian values such as filial piety and loyalty, and instructed citizens to be of service to the Imperial state.⁴

The Fundamental Principles of the Primary Education Law (*Shōgakkō kyōikusoku taikō*, 1891) outlines how the Rescript should be adopted in education (Hōrei zensho 1912, 345–348). Ethics became central to the curriculum, and should teach ‘filial piety, fraternity, benevolence, sincerity, gratitude and respect, loyalty and courage, deference etc. through practical examples, and above all a spirit of reverence for the emperor and patriotism (*sonnō aikoku*)’. The law states that children should be taught their duties towards the nation, the rules of society and proper manners. History classes should not only teach ‘the names of emperors, the military past and the origin of Japanese culture’, but also ethics.

In the early Meiji period, the government welcomed Johann Pestalozzi’s (1746–1827) developmental education theory that promoted learning through curiosity and discovery. However, the newfound principles of Japanese education proved to combine better with Herbartian education theory, that stressed morality and the study of history (Lincicome 1995, 101). Under (Rescript-influenced) Herbartian didactics, the pupil was encouraged to be diligent and good rather than spontaneous and curious. The Fundamental Principles of the Primary Education Law mentioned earlier prescribes in line with Herbartian theory that lessons in ethics should be illustrated with examples of good deeds. For history, the Law instructs to ‘make use of pictures etc., so that it will be easier for children to imagine the contemporary circumstances. As to the speech and behaviour etc. of [historical] characters, take these up as moral lessons and compare them to proverbs etc. and use these to [teach children to] discriminate between right and wrong’ (Hōrei zensho 1912, 348).

‘Imaginariness’, such as stories and songs about national heroes, played a large role in the shaping of children’s dispositions at schools during the Taisho and early Showa periods (Cave 2016, 10). The invention of such an approach must be sought in the late nineteenth century. Historical characters and exemplars had never been far away from Japanese education. Early modern primers contain legends about the twenty-four exemplars of filial piety and references to historical generals also seen elsewhere in popular print. These primers continued to circulate in the early Meiji period, even though new, Western-oriented textbooks appeared on the market. Some of these newly produced textbooks also introduced historical generals. The first modern primary school reader published by the government, *Shōgaku tokuhon* (‘Primary School Reader’, 1873), was a translation of texts from the *American School and Family Series* (1860) by Marcius Willson (1813–1905) and concurred with the slogan *bunmei kaika* (‘civilization and enlightenment’). There was, however, also a variant version of the *Shōgaku tokuhon* (1874) that introduces Japanese historical figures and Confucian morality in its last two volumes (Tsurumi 1974, 251).

A new interpretation of historical figures in the context of national history and culture made this heritage relevant in modern times. During the 1890s,

narrating history along the lines of ‘Great Men’ became the standard, as opposed to an earlier (Meiji period) approach in which history was organized by the reigns of emperors. Historical exemplars became the ‘imaginaries’ through which the ideology of the Rescript was explained to children.⁵ Most regularly appearing in national language readers and ethics textbooks are Yamato Takeru (leg. 72–114), Kusunoki Masashige (1294–1336) and his son Kusunoki Masatsura (1326–1348), Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Minamoto Yoshitsune.⁶ With the exception of Yoshitsune, these historical characters exemplify specific ethics. Yamato Takeru and Kusunoki Masashige illustrated loyalty to the Emperor. Kusunoki Masatsura was moreover an example of a filial son, who according to the ethics textbook *Shinpen shūshin kyōten* (‘New Ethics Primer’, 1900) decided to follow his father Kusunoki in death. He was however stopped by his mother, who told him it is better to die while fighting the enemies of the court (Fukyūsha henshūsho (1900) 1902, vol. 1, 5–11). Hideyoshi’s biography in the same ethics reader represents an example of self-cultivation (*risshi*), diligence (*seikin*), companionship (*kōyū*), loyalty to the Emperor (*kin’ō*) and ambition (*taishi*) (Fukyūsha henshūsho (1900) 1902, vol. 2, 5–22). The Rescript, in this textbook printed on the first page, formed a new code to re-assess the premodern historical and legendary narratives that circulated in creative memory.

A similarity between the descriptions of Masatsura and Hideyoshi is that the hero has an exemplary function as a child or young man. The first chapter on Hideyoshi explains that he was a very smart and determined boy, who grew up in a village in Owari and lost his father at a young age. As a young man he attended very well to Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582). Masatsura was only eleven years old (about the same age as the reader) during the described events. As to Yoshitsune, primary school students would first encounter him as a boy in their textbooks, under his boyhood name Ushiwakamaru. Yoshitsune/Ushiwakamaru does not appear in ethics readers, but most national language readers of the 1890s onwards for the lower grades of primary school introduce the episode of Ushiwakamaru and the warrior monk Musashibō Benkei at Gojō bridge in Kyoto. *Jinjō shōgaku tokusho kyōhon* (‘Reader for the Lower Primary School’, 1894) stresses that (1) Ushiwakamaru was very strong and brave, even though he was a small boy, (2) that Benkei became a good retainer, and that (3) the ‘Minamoto Yoshitsune’ who will be mentioned later in the textbook is Ushiwakamaru (Kaigo 1964, 715).

These examples show that in line with educational policy and the reigning didactic theory, historical generals were used as exemplars adapted to the stage of development of the child. What Lotman calls ‘external communications’, here consisting of the concepts of nation, elementary education and Herbartian pedagogy, together with new codes formed in the semantic process (i.e., the Rescript), profoundly changed the way in which historical generals were

represented. Yet at the same time these cultural icons exerted a unifying function following from their origins in a known semantic field. Commercial publishers and authors followed suit, but discovered in premodern historical figures also dispositions that varied from the government's interpretation of an ideal citizen.

Hakubunkan's visions on young citizens and exemplars

The publishing house Hakubunkan was founded in 1887 by the businessman Ōhashi Sahei (1836–1901) and published magazines and affordable popular book series for both adults and young readers. Ōhashi boasted that he did more for education than the Ministry of Education itself (Richter 1997, 594). For the youngest readers, Hakubunkan published the magazines *Yōnen zasshi* ('Magazine for Youth', 1891–1894) and *Shōnen sekai* ('Youth's World', 1895–1933) as well as many book series on Japanese history, for which the publisher hired a diverse group of authors: educators, scholars of Japanese literature and history, men with a background in law, politics, or the military, and pioneering young authors such as Iwaya Sazanami.

The rival publishing house Gakureikan had coined the term *shōkokumin* or 'little citizens' in 1889, with its youth magazine *Shōkokumin*. Hakubunkan conceptualized and targeted a similar audience of 'nationalized' youths, addressed as *yōnen* or *shōnen*. In the late nineteenth century these terms referred to both boys and girls, yet the latter are far less frequently represented and addressed in the youth magazines and book series of the 1890s. The audience thus seems to have been pictured as predominantly male, with female readers in a secondary position (consisting of siblings for example).

Yōnen zasshi contains many essays on citizenship, both instructions for the future on such matters as conscription and taxes as well as texts on the proper dispositions of young people. In the first volume of *Yōnen zasshi* (January 1891), the text of the Imperial Rescript on Education is printed and is followed first by an explanation that stresses the centrality of the Emperor and then short essays on the concepts of *kuni* ('the country'), *kimi* ('the Emperor') and *tami* ('the people'). An essay in the third volume titled 'Guidelines for Youth' (*Yōnen no kokoroe*) by Naitō Chisō (1827–1903), army lecturer and professor of history at the Imperial University, gives three central guidelines for youth: (1) be filial to your parents and ancestors, (2) revere the Emperor, and (3) worship the *kami* that were present when the Emperor's ancestors created the country (Naitō 1891, 3–6). The author impresses upon the reader that a country existing since the time of the gods (that is, Japan) is unique in the world.

As stated above, the young citizen is repeatedly gendered male. A writing assignment in *Yōnen zasshi* asks, 'what is a boy?' (*danshi to wa ikan*). The winning submission (1891, 1:23), written by a pupil from a higher primary school

(*kōtō shōgakkō*), echoes Naitō's message. To the journal's satisfaction, this pupil interprets the question in a national context: a boy must study hard, make a success in life, be loyal to the Emperor, filial to his parents, and let his success be of use to the whole nation. Moreover, he must let 'the great name of the nation reverberate in foreign countries' (quoted in Tsuzukihashi 1972, 124–125). The successive magazine *Shōnen sekai* is rife with this latter sentiment, under influence of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–95). According to a circular argument in the essay 'Boys of Great Japan' (*Dainipponkoku danji*), the best way to serve the country is to work for the navy, although one can also advance trade for which is needed 'maritime authority' (Matsui 1895, 1425–1426). The essay 'Japanese Boys' (*Nippon danji*) (1895, 1:5) moreover states that 'courage and loyalty are what defines a Japanese boy'. One should 'be resolved and study hard' but also be 'independent and adventurous', as is exemplified in such books as *Robinson Crusoe* and Japanese legends as *Ōeyama* and *Kachikachi mountain*.⁷ This text might very well be written by Iwaya himself, who was the editor-in-chief of *Shōnen sekai*. The initial reverence for the Rescript changed into an indirect critique on the more 'passive' citizen promoted in government education.⁸ This is also visible in the metaphorical use of historical characters.

Historical novels for children 'not only bring images of the past into circulation in order to commemorate or build a collective memory, they are also explicit agents in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next', and moreover 'they transmit social norms and values' (Parlevliet 2014, 470). We might explain why these texts can at the same time both transmit and change by applying Lotman's model of creative memory (instead of Assmann's notion of the archive) and consider the texts to be *in circulation*, in a process of constant updating. *Yōnen zasshi* drew upon a bottomless supply of texts about historical figures (in most cases men, but occasionally women) to illustrate the Rescript.⁹ In the first issue, following the explanation of the Rescript, three exemplars are introduced: the general Katō Kiyomasa (1562–1611), who showed wise judgement, the Confucian scholar Minagawa Kien (1735–1807), who studied so hard that the tatami under his seat crumbled away, and the merchant Shiobara Tasuke (1743–1816), who lived frugally and worked day and night to restore the family fortunes. Hakubunkan's early book series for youth also pay homage to the Rescript and conjure up a range of exemplars from history. For example, *Katei kyōiku rekishi tokuhon* ('History Reading-book for Home Education', 12 volumes, 1891–1892) by Ochiai Naobumi (1861–1903) and Ikebe Yoshikata (1861–1923) is based on Shinto myth and episodes from *Taiheiki*, *Genpei jōsuiki* and other war tales. The first volume opens with a calligraphic representation of the Rescript. In the introduction, the authors state that the aim of the series is to raise in children (*yōnen*) a loyal disposition through historical examples. Moreover, by adapting the narrative,

embellishing the language, and adding pictures, it aims to appeal to the readers, ‘so they will remember the [historical] truth better’ (Katsuo 1977, 39–40).

In *Shōnen sekai*, under the influence of the First Sino-Japanese War, historical figures became less like figurative representations of the ethics promoted in education, and more like devices to ignite enthusiasm for the army and confidence in Japan’s position vis-à-vis the West. In 1895 and 1896, the rubric *shiden* (‘historical biographies’) takes up a number of historical figures with a focus on war and conquest. The first installment introduces Toyotomi Hideyoshi, the conquest of Korea by Empress Jingū, and the Battle of Trafalgar, written by respectively Yoda Gakkai (1834–1909), Ochiai Naobumi, and Ōwada Takeki (1896–1899). Historical warriors also appear in the *kuchi-e* (frontispieces) of *Shōnen sekai* and in serialized stories placed at the end of the magazine. Between 1896 and 1899, Hakubunkan published the history series *Nippon rekishitan* (‘Japanese History Tales’) by Ōwada Takeki, for children in upper primary schools. The volumes introduce the mythical origin of Japan and the deeds of famous generals, including a biography of Yoshitsune titled *Kurō hangan* (1897), based on episodes from the war tales *Gikeiki* and *Heike monogatari*. This series tried to instill a patriotic and martial disposition in children. Iwaya’s *Nippon otogibanashi* was published in parallel to *Nippon rekishitan* and addresses a somewhat younger audience by using simpler language and incorporating fantastic elements and popular plots.

According to David Bialock, premodern popular traditions of consuming war tales were in the 1890s still ‘a category difficult to assimilate to the newly imported western genres of novel, drama and epic poem’ for men engaged in modern classical scholarship, while modern authors began to turn to such works as *Heike monogatari* for inspiration only during the early twentieth century (Bialock 2000, 168–169). Clearly a semantic common ground had been found between warrior legends and the western genre of youth literature much earlier. These ‘active’ texts that resisted scholarly redefinition shifted to the new category of youth literature, that represented a stage of development (rather than the fixed state of banality of the common folk) and a project of national importance. Youth literature thus being framed within a discourse on nation and elementary education, consequently provided a way for critical citizens to interrogate and contest these concepts.

According to Katsuo Kin’ya’s analysis of Iwaya’s *Nippon otogibanashi*, the main characteristics of this series is the nationalistic agenda and moralistic subtext (Katsuo 1977, 238–50).¹⁰ However, Iwaya received complaints from contemporaries (discussed below) about a scandalous ‘lack’ of *chūkun aikoku* (‘loyalty and patriotism’) in his texts and formulates his visions rather in opposition to nationalism. Although the favourable representations of martial heroes in *Nippon otogibanashi* are clearly written in support of militarism, *kyōkunteki* (‘moralistic’) and *chūkun aikoku* cannot be taken as self-evident representations

of shared ideals in the Meiji period. Looking beyond the ‘isms’, Iwaya’s comparatively progressive views on childhood come to light, and the way in which he introduces the codes of youth literature in the mechanisms of text generation.

Iwaya on young citizens and the concept of youth literature

When Iwaya started to write for children in 1891, there was not yet a Japanese term for the genre of youth literature. In the introductory remarks of *Koganemaru* (1891) he proposed to use the word *shōnen bungaku* as an equivalent to the German *Jugendschrift* or English ‘juvenile literature’. Hakubunkan consolidated the term by using it as the title of the new book series that *Koganemaru* was the first installment of. In the same year, the term *otogibanashi* appears for the first time in the table of contents of the magazine *Nippon no shōnen* (‘Youths of Japan’) (1891, 3:2), where it classifies a story by Iwaya’s hand (Mukōgawa 1993, 334). From 1896, with the appearance of Iwaya’s book series *Nippon otogibanashi*, the term *otogibanashi* became more generally known as literary writing for (young) children.¹¹ When explaining the aim of his writings, Iwaya in many cases used the terms *otogibanashi* and *shōnen bungaku* interchangeably as a term for ‘youth literature’.

Iwaya based his ideas about *otogibanashi* initially on Western fairy tales. The standard biographies of Iwaya tell of his encounter with a collection of *Märchen* by Franz Otto Spamer (1820–1886), sent by his brother who studied in Germany. Fairy-tale-like as the ‘chance encounter’ might sound, Iwaya in his youth also read translations of Arabian Nights, Aesop’s Fables, and works by Jules Verne (Katō 1998, 276). As a teenager, Iwaya was a student at the German school in Tokyo (Doitsugaku kyōkai gakkō, established in 1883), that would prepare him for a career in medicine, in the footsteps of his father. However, he used the knowledge gained of foreign languages to broaden his horizon in literature. According to his diaries, he was an avid reader of both Western and Japanese literature and frequented the theater where traditional plays such as *Chūshingura* (‘The Treasury of Loyal Retainers’) and *Hashi Benkei* (‘Benkei on the Bridge’) were on the program (Kuwabara 1998). He was a member of the literary coterie Ken’yūsha, and well-connected in Meiji intellectual circles.

Iwaya was not only inspired by the contents and structure of fairy tales but also discovered in German *Märchen* a remedy to the dismal state in which he considered Japan’s youth and the nation to be. In the essay *Meruhen ni tsuite* (‘About Märchen’, 1898), he reacted to a critical article written by poet and scholar of Japanese literature Takeshima Hagoromo (1872–1967), who considered Iwaya’s stories insufficiently didactic and full of ‘bizarre ideas’ (Kan 1955, 344–346). Could Iwaya not just devote himself to the themes of patriotism and

loyalty? Iwaya answered that it is not his role to impart *chūkun aikoku* and *kok-kateki kannen* ('a sense of nation').¹² There was already a suitable form of literature that conveys these notions, namely textbooks. Even though Iwaya admitted that ethics such as *chūkō jingi* ('loyalty and filial piety, humanity and justice') sometimes play a role in his stories, his main aim was to emulate the essence of *Märchen*, which exists in the *absence* of symbolism or a clear didactic message.

Iwaya believed that lecturing children about what they must or must not do, does more harm than good. In the essay *Katei to jidō* ('The Family and the Child', 1899) Iwaya observed that too many families ('if they can be called a family') raise children in old-fashioned ways (Kan 1955, 351). He complained that Japanese children are cowardly and unspontaneous, which is 'unchildlike' (*jidōrashikunai*) and will result in twisted, timid adults. Forbidding rowdy play will turn a boy into a 'weak, feminine person' (*kayowai memeshii ningen*). If forced to listen to sentimental stories, children will become nervous, tearful adults, not capable of doing anything great. Rather than rules and reproaches, Iwaya argued, one should give children more freedom and stimulate their imagination through stories.

Iwaya aimed to create more *wanpaku* or 'spirited' dispositions. From a negative viewpoint, the word *wanpaku-mono* might refer to a 'brat'. However, like the 'spirited' or 'strong-willed' children discussed in present-day parenting manuals, for Iwaya the concept not only involved impulsivity and disobedience but also great potential.¹³ In the essay *Meruhen ni tsuite* he stated: 'whereas fathers and older brothers want children to be obedient, I try to make them *wanpaku*, and whereas schools want to make them smart, I turn them into fools (*baka*)' (Kan 1955, 345–346). By offering Japanese children imaginations that stress the martial (*shōbu*) and adventurous (*bōken*), Iwaya wanted to get rid of the 'islanders' disposition' (*shimajin konjō*) and create 'boys of a seafaring nation' (*kaikoku shōnen*). Children's stories did not have to be adventures on a grand scale, but of a nature that matches the worldview of young children and may, to critics such as Takeshima Hagoromo, seem like 'bizarre nonsense'. In *Katei to jidō*, Iwaya makes a connection between Columbus' 'discovery' of America and the 'imaginings' (*kūsō*) he hypothetically enjoyed as a young child, such as flying in the air or walking on water. The example must show that the imagination of Western children has been stimulated in the right way, which develops into a willingness to embark on an adventure in the real world when they are adults. Iwaya discovered in literary texts from the West (such as fairy tales) the root of the great deeds and expansionism of Western men, a root that should be planted in Japan as well.

Iwaya continued to make the same points after a two-year sojourn in Berlin (between 1900 and 1902), although fused with new vocabulary and a grander view of the relationship between *otogibanashi* and nation. In *Shōnenbungaku ni*

tsuite ('About Youth Literature', 1904), he argues that the national character of a given nation is reflected in its *otogibanashi*. In other words, the strengths and weaknesses of a nation depend on the nature of the *otogibanashi* told to the nation's children (Kuwabara 1977, 356–359). He argues that in case of rewriting, retelling or inventing *otogibanashi*, one should appropriate the stories to current times in such a way that they offer 'indirect teachings' (*kansetsu kyōkun*). In 1915, Iwaya published *Momotarō-shugi no kyōiku* ('Education according to the Momotarō-principle'), a work from which he drew freely during his public storytelling and lectures in Japan and its colonies from 1916 onwards. The concept of *Momotarō-shugi* clearly originates in what Iwaya termed *wanpaku-shugi* ('the principle of *wanpaku*') seventeen years earlier in *Märchen ni tsuite*. Iwaya's initial retelling of *Momotarō* (1894) (see Henry 2009) is however only the first of forty-eight volumes (next to many *otogibanashi* for *Shōnen sekai*) in which Iwaya would develop his idea of 'teaching indirectly' martiality, adventurousness and the positive side of *wanpaku-mono*.

The strong-willed, brave boy Ushiwakamaru

Ushiwakamaru, the twenty-third volume of *Nippon mukashibanashi*, focuses on three famous episodes from Yoshitsune's youth: (1) the perilous journey to the capital with his mother and brothers after his father Minamoto Yoshitomo (1123–1160) had been killed by the Heike. (2) Ushiwakamaru's battle with mythical *tengu* near Kurama temple, and (3) the battle with the warrior monk Musashibō Benkei on Gojō bridge in Kyoto. The illustrations by Toyohara Chikanobu (1838–1912) reflect the premodern iconographical tradition that accompanied these episodes. In an additional episode (inspired by other war tales) Yoshitsune's older half-brother Minamoto Yoritomo (1147–1199) tests his endurance with a *yugishō* or 'hot water test'. This addition results in a fairytale-like pattern of three challenges that lead to Yoshitsune's appointment as a general and the defeat of the Heike. *Ushiwakamaru* closes with a reference to Yoshitsune's martial exploits, and a final illustration of warriors leaving for battle.

Ushiwakamaru might be characterized both by what remains and what is omitted from the early modern cycle of Yoshitsune legends. Iwaya made use of plots circulating in the popular tradition and rewrote them according to the codes of the modern genre of youth literature. Conspicuous are the absence of Yoshitsune's encounters with beautiful women, the graphic violence not uncommon to *kusazōshi*, and Yoshitsune's tragic downfall. Iwaya was criticized for introducing a 'mistress' in *Koganemaru* (Piel 2010, 214), and apparently, he took note that sexuality does not belong in the genre of children's literature. His rewritings of warrior legends strictly follow the tendency of homosociality also seen in historical fiction and hero-novels for teenage and adult men

(De Groot 2010, 79, Karlin 2014). Violence is kept to a minimum in *Ushiwakamaru*, compared to the bloody scenes in seventeenth century *musha-ehon* (see Kimbrough 2015) but also the copperplate-printed *kusazōshi* of the 1880s. Martial encounters are instead enlivened by onomatopoeia and dialogue that convey the atmosphere and the disposition of the protagonist. The legends of Yoshitsune's downfall are absent in *Ushiwakamaru*. Yoshitsune led several successful battles in the Genpei War (1180–1185), but was afterwards persecuted by his half-brother Minamoto Yoritomo, the first Kamakura shogun. The war tale *Gikeiki* chronicles Yoshitsune's flight to Hiraizumi and ends with his ritual suicide. The tragic sentiment invoked by legends surrounding Yoshitsune's flight has traditionally been termed *hōgan būki*, 'sympathy for the lieutenant' and is reflected in his increasingly passive disposition.

The semantic field of the underdog or fugitive might however be said to play an inversed role in *Ushiwakamaru*. In the canonical Noh play *Ataka* the 'passive' adult Yoshitsune is conventionally played by a child-actor, signifying his innocence and dependence on his retainers. On the other hand, *kusazōshi* dealt with these fugitive years by presenting every hurdle as a thrilling challenge that is successfully overcome by Yoshitsune and his loyal retainers. Iwaya however created a third option that incorporates both sentiments. In the first pages *Ushiwakamaru* is depicted as a fatherless infant crying pitifully in his mother's arms while she ('a weak-legged woman') trudges through the snow. *Ushiwakamaru* remains a child or junior, repeatedly perceived of by others as weaker, until he proves the opposite. The child Yoshitsune (*Ushiwakamaru*) thus starts his life as a fugitive, but 'overcomes' the initial setback by assertively taking his fate in his own hands.

The three challenges in *Ushiwakamaru* can be understood as 'biographical' anecdotes about Yoshitsune that idealize his character as a boy. The first display of *Ushiwakamaru*'s character occurs during the encounter with the *tengu*:

[Ushiwaka] read sutras, practiced *tenarai* (writing) and did his best on his studies, but as he was a naturally competitive and strong-willed child, when ... [he heard about his ancestry] he decided he wanted to become a splendid general and punish the Heike. ... Waiting for the time when people would be asleep, he quietly escaped the temple, went to a place called Sōjō Valley and practiced sword fighting, battling the trees and rocks with the wooden sword that he brought with him.

A certain night, when Ushiwaka as usual went to Sōjō Valley and wielded his wooden sword, he suddenly heard a sound as if trees were snapping in a storm, upon which right in front of him there appeared the terrible Ō'nyūdō with his big eyes and big nose.

Ushiwaka was strong of heart and not one to give an inch (*biku to mo shinai*), whoever shows up. Immediately preparing his wooden sword, he asked: 'What are you?' Ō'nyūdō laughed loudly. 'I am the great *tengu* who's been living in this valley for ages.' (Iwaya 1896, 9–11)

Ushiwakamaru willingly leaves the safety of the temple and does not run away when an unknown creature appears. Although Ushiwakamaru is a model student by daytime, he is also described as a ‘strong-willed child’ (*ki no tsuyoi ko*), a characteristic of *wanpaku-mono* that reveals itself in his determination to become a skilled warrior. The wooden sword makes a connection to play-acting or martial arts, in which the reader himself might engage.

The next scene, the fight on Gojō bridge, is a consequence of Ushiwakamaru’s determination to make Benkei his helper in the quest against the Heike. Benkei at first takes it easy because his opponent is ‘just a child’. This is one of the moments in which the reader is reminded of Ushiwakamaru’s status as a child. Benkei is however beaten by his agile opponent. The scene ends with the revelation of Ushiwakamaru’s identity and implies that had Benkei known the identity of the boy, he would not have raised his hand. There is thus actually no need for Ushiwakamaru to prove his superiority by fighting. In later volumes, Iwaya would present his protagonists as runaways and rejected sons who have no other choice but to fight for a (higher) place in society (as is the case for Hiyoshimaru). The last confirmation of Ushiwakamaru’s strong character comes in the form of the hot water test, that shows his endurance to pain. The scene is moreover a display of brotherly affection, even though according to ‘adult versions’ (notably *Gikeiki*), it was the misunderstanding between them that would lead to Yoshitsune’s tragic downfall. Finally, Iwaya shortly describes that Yoritomo appointed Yoshitsune as a general, after which he launched a ‘punitive expedition’ against the Heike and brought it to a successful end.

The ending of *Ushiwakamaru* follows neither *Gikeiki* nor any other pre-modern pattern. *Kusazōshi* that chronicle Yoshitsune’s life generally end on the positive note that Yoshitsune became the king of Ezo (current Hokkaido), a legend that gained popularity in the eighteenth century. This celebratory finale was partly inspired by the fact that these booklets were often given as New-Years’ presents. In Iwaya’s case, a more optimistic interpretation of Yoshitsune’s adventures was inspired by the idea that sentimental stories are harmful for the young mind. Yet instead of introducing the well-known Ezo legend, Yoshitsune lives ‘happily ever after’ as a famous general, exchanging the vicissitudes of his adult life with the newly invented image of warriors leaving for battle.

Hiyoshimaru, the epitome of *wanpaku*

Hiyoshimaru similarly concentrates on episodes from the protagonists’ youth and exemplifies how Toyotomi Hideyoshi rose in the world from farmer’s son to powerful member of the samurai. Hideyoshi in the Meiji educational context was not only praised as the pacifier of Japan, but also represented the concept

of *risshin shusse* ('rising in the world'). This slogan had cultural significance since the early Meiji period and was exemplified by Samuel Smiles' book *Self Help* (1859) that promoted entrepreneurship. *Hiyoshimaru* also shows similarities to American nineteenth-century children's books about great inventors and presidents, in which the moral character of the protagonist tends to become obvious through 'anecdotal' adventures (myths) from childhood (Hintz 2008). The moral example is more important than the facts.

Textbooks jump from Hideyoshi's humble beginnings to his service to Oda Nobunaga in young adulthood, and his military exploits. Iwaya on the other hand introduces Hiyoshimaru's auspicious birth, his outcaste life in the village, and his troublemaking as a temple boy. These episodes can be traced back in print to *Ehon Taikōki* ('The Illustrated Chronicles of the Regent', 1797–1802), *Ehon Toyotomi kunkōki* ('The Illustrated Chronicles of Toyotomi's Exploits', 1857–1884), the popular *jitsuroku* ('real accounts') of historical figures, and woodblock or copperplate printed *kusazōshi*. A little over half of the narrative deals with Hiyoshimaru's life up till the age of fifteen. The latter part describes his resourcefulness and devotion while serving Oda Nobunaga. Only in the last pages he takes the name Hideyoshi and becomes 'like a general' (*shōgun-rashiku narimashita*), which still hints at immaturity (Iwaya 1897a, 46).

As in *Ushiwakamaru*, the character of the protagonist is exhibited through several 'anecdotal' episodes. Hiyoshimaru already knows from a young age that he wants to become a great general, engages in *ikusa gokko* ('playfighting' or 'war play') and apprentices himself to several samurai of increasing status. Hiyoshimaru is described as a 'wild' child (*ki no arai ko*), a mischief-maker (*itazura-mono*), and someone who constantly resorts to violent (*ranbō*) behavior. Impetuous, unruly boys already appear in a positive light in *Nippon mukashibanashi*, for example Momotarō, the god Susano-o, Kintarō, and Lazy Tarō. Momotarō is an assertive, almost haughty teenage boy. Susano-o is called a *wanpaku* little boy, but 'certainly not a bad *kami*' (Iwaya 2001, 204). Kintarō plays sumo with animals and appoints himself their leader or *gaki taishō* (Iwaya 2001, 301). Kintarō's sumo-wrestling episode is not invented by Iwaya but originates in premodern representations. Iwaya however transfers sumo and play-fighting also to other representations of 'historical' warrior boys and more importantly, finds value in this behaviour in the modern context, whereas ethics textbooks do certainly not. As has been pointed out by Sabine Frühstück, the assumption that children are naturally drawn to war play has been used to normalize war (not limited to Japan). Inciting children to engage in war play would make them more willing to join the army as adults (Frühstück 2017, 24). Historical settings form an exotic yet national backdrop for play-fighting.

One of the most engaging displays of Hiyoshimaru's character takes place during his stay at the temple.

... one day, when Hiyoshimaru was twelve years old, he prepared offerings for the main Amida [Buddha] statue, and yelled: 'Hey, Amida, eat this food!' But how can an Amida statue made of gold eat any dishes?

As the statue sat motionlessly, Hiyoshimaru became irritated and said: 'You lazy bum, why don't you eat the food I prepared for you? You're disrespectful!'

He quickly stood up, fetched himself a stick and busted the head of the honourable Amida.

'This is fun! This is fun!' Hiyoshimaru cried, and he continued to wield the stick till the statue was shattered. (Iwaya 1897a, 8–9)

The comical scene shows not only Hiyoshimaru's unruliness, but also his 'childlike' original thinking and defiance of adult authority. The Buddhist temple makes repeated appearance in *Nippon otogibanashi* and might be read as a metaphor for the primary school, in which according to Iwaya children are only raised to be obedient and diligent.

Hiyoshimaru is kicked out of the temple, starts roaming, and on the way challenges a group of samurai that pass him while he is sleeping on Yahagi bridge in Okazaki. This episode originates in *Ehon Taikōki* and during the second half of the nineteenth century rapidly developed into an iconic scene associated with the young Hideyoshi. The appearance of this new iconography can hardly be unconnected to representations of Ushiwakamaru on Gojō bridge. This process of text generation involving 'Gojō bridge' and 'Yahagi bridge' stayed within the sphere of premodern text production. However, with the influx of new codes both episodes came to play a role in 'bridging' the rift that opened between known and new mechanisms of text generation. In Iwaya's interpretation, both 'bridges' represent a moment of victory for the young protagonist on his path towards a self-determined life. Because of his 'strong character', the samurai allow Hiyoshimaru to come along. Soon, however, the boy realises that this rabble will not help him on his way to become a great general. He returns to the village and is made an apprentice by his family. This also ends badly upon which the village and his parents give up on the boy.

Hiyoshimaru's unruly behavior is nowhere framed as a 'mistake' that he must overcome or for which punishment is the right reaction. Adult rejection of children's 'imaginative' actions is a repeated pattern in *Nippon otogibanashi* and causes young protagonists to take their fate in their own hands. In *Kawanakajima* (volume 10) the boy Katsuchiyo (Takeda Shingen, 1521–1573) successfully kills a tanuki (raccoon dog) who disguised itself as Katsuchiyo's wooden horse. 'Even though Katsuchiyo was an admirable boy', the author observes, 'his father was rough and stupid' (Iwaya 1897b, 10). The eleven-year-old Katsuchiyo leaves the home and becomes a warrior. The misunderstanding is on the side of the father who represents the controlling and moralistic parenting that Iwaya attacks in his essays. Iwaya's protagonists

thus seem to reject the premodern *ie* (household) system, but do not have a modern *katei* to support them either. They find companions and mentors on their way, as if in limbo.

There are two representations of understanding adults in *Hiyoshimaru*, consisting of an old lady and Oda Nobunaga. A lonesome old lady living on the outskirts of the village feeds Hiyoshimaru. The boy promises: ‘Grandma, you are so very nice. When I rule the world, I will multiply this rice grain ten thousand times and give it back to you’ (Iwaya 1897a, 25). Hiyoshimaru feels inclined to show filiality to this surrogate grandmother, which proves that supporting *wanpaku* boys is not a waste of time. Hiyoshimaru becomes less impulsive but even more determined as he grows up. As an older teenager, he comes to understand that the study of war strategy is important and chooses to be loyal to the lord who recognizes his talents, Oda Nobunaga. He even practices self-control when belittled by Nobunaga’s retainers, who are jealous of the favors that Nobunaga bestows upon the young man. He promises to himself he will turn the bullies into his own retainers in due time. An important trait of *wanpaku-mono* is thus their unruliness and their persistence in doing things their own way, including choosing someone more ‘worthy’ of their loyalty. As proven by history, this disposition brought Hiyoshimaru to the top echelons of a martially minded national community.

Conclusion

This article proposed to consider the appropriation of Edo period material in children’s literature in the 1890s as an essential process of transformation. It showed how Iwaya, a successful author of Meiji children’s literature, creatively re-used Edo period texts circulating in cultural memory by applying the codes of nineteenth-century children’s literature from the West. The success of this semiosis lies in the potential of the new text as a national narrative and model of citizenship.

In Juri Lotman’s spatial model of culture, or semiosphere, texts and codes enter through the periphery, or peripheries of sub-systems where new texts are generated in a process Lotman termed ‘creative memory’. While medieval texts such as *Heike monogatari* were reframed as national epic or classical literature, adaptations of warrior legends that accumulated during the Edo period in such genres as *kusazōshi* rather found common ground in fairy tales and children’s literature. Iwaya’s adaptations of folktales and warrior legends initially tilted towards the conventions of fairy tales (*Ushiwakamaru*) but developed into a form closer to historical fiction for children (*Hiyoshimaru*). The latter genre is ‘born with a vested interest in creating a nation’s history in order to create a common identity’ (Skyggebjerg 2008, 30). Historical fiction for children often plays a supplementary role to history textbooks, which can be considered a

‘collective autobiography’ of the nation (Assmann 2010, 101). Yet the genre can also constitute variants to curriculum and dominant narratives of citizenship (Parlevliet 2014, 475). Initially, Japanese authors in the new commercial realm of youth literature expanded upon the ideal of a diligent, filial, rather passive citizen stipulated in The Imperial Rescript on Education and disseminated in primary schools. However, the (imminent) First Sino-Japanese War opened a window to imagining Japan as a powerful military nation, and its young citizens as its seeds. Heroes from the past were remoulded and lined up (literally serialised) to satisfy patriotic enthusiasm. Children’s literature thus not only aimed to socialize children but had ‘a key function (...) also in the maintenance of selfhood for the adults who produce, disseminate, and co-read the texts’ (O’Sullivan 2011, 6).

Iwaya’s *otogibanashi* about historical generals were a result of semiosis between texts and codes originating in Edo period popular culture (plays, prints and books), and foreign texts and codes of Western youth literature. Iwaya reframed and highlighted images and episodes that fitted into his understanding of this new genre and its audience. The dynamics of this semiosis naturally led to a shift ‘in the elements considered significant and insignificant within the text’ (Lotman 2019a, 136). The conventions of *otogibanashi* caused part of the habitual episodes in *kusazōshi* to be eliminated, for example those related to sexuality. Other elements were carried over yet changed appearance, such as the semantic field of the underdog/child in Yoshitsune legends. Iwaya’s *Nippon otogibanashi* was the first Hakubunkan history series to single out boyhood legends of historical generals and present them as exemplars. The reactions of Iwaya’s young protagonists to their social surroundings and a range of challenges reveal a *wanpaku* or ‘spirited’ disposition. This concept did not hatch simply from (abstract) ideological principles, but crystallized in the process of creative memory, here reflected in a concrete succession of literary experiments. Iwaya used this (developing) ‘code’ to re-assess a number of popular warrior legends, while also creating a basis for his expert opinion on youth literature. *Wanpaku* was thus a code appearing from, and instrumental in, the phasing out of structures of premodern text generation and the shaping of the new semiosphere of Meiji youth literature. This was an urgent project in the 1890s, as the cohesion of culture depended both on the availability of ‘active’ premodern texts *and* the adequateness of the mechanisms of text generation.

Notes

1. *Katei to jidō* (1898), reprinted in Kan 1955, 350–355.
2. Maria Nikolajeva has proposed to apply Lotman’s theory of the semiosphere to the historical development of Western children’s literature, which might be understood as a ‘succession of changing cultural codes’ that converge, diverge and overlap with the ‘adult code’ (Nikolajeva 1995, 39).

3. Registration rose from around 50% at the start of the decennium to 80% in 1900 (90% for boys, 70% for girls), while other sources report the actual attendance rising from 15% to 40% (Galan 2015, 282).
4. The Rescript lacked specificity which triggered ideologues to compose hundreds of interpretive texts (Gluck 1985, 102–127). Essays and stories about exemplars in youth magazines of the 1890s can be added to the ‘countless evocations’ (Gluck 1998, 127) that explained the Rescript in terms of loyalty and patriotism.
5. In the 1890s, ethics textbooks were published privately but had to be based on the Rescript, whose correct interpretation was checked by the government. In 1903, the Ministry of Education became the sole entity that produced textbooks for ethics, national language, and history.
6. Based on the textbooks represented in *Nihon kyōkasho taikei* that were published between 1887 and 1900.
7. No author is indicated, but Iwaya often wrote in this rubric (*ronsetsu*). The author argues that Japanese boys already from a young age know warrior legends and folktales by heart and calls these stories a ‘textbook’. The legend of Oeyama tells how Minamoto Yorimitsu (or Raikō) beat the monster Shutendōji. The folktale *Kachikachi mountain* tells of a hare’s successful revenge on a deceiving tanuki. Japanese translations of *Robinson Crusoe* existed since the late Edo period and were popular with boys in the early Meiji period (see Wakabayashi 2008, 232).
8. Jason Karlin (2014) in his study of hero novels for teenage boys in the late Meiji period argues that the protagonists bring change and can be read as a critique on the perceived chaos and weakness in Japanese politics. He connects this interpretation of heroes to the translation of Thomas Carlyle’s *Upon Heroes and the Heroic in History* by Yamaji Aizan in 1898. History along the lines of ‘Great Men’ however already filtered into Meiji youth magazines much earlier through translations of Western sources that applied this theory. The adventurousness proposed for boys in *Shōnen sekai* does not criticize Japanese politics, but indirectly questions government education.
9. *Yōnen zasshi* featured several series about historical exemplars, such as *Nihon buyū kagami* (‘Mirror of Japanese Martiality’) and *Shōnen risshiden* (‘Accounts of Self-cultivation for Youths’). Women are rarely represented as memorable historical figures, yet readers of either gender might learn from loyal warriors or admire heroic men, while internalizing which behavior and responsibilities are coded ‘male’.
10. Katsuo cites for example from two volumes on the Sino-Japanese War, in which Iwaya stresses Japan’s martial prowess and superiority over China. In the last paragraphs of *Hiyoshimaru*, Iwaya laments the fact that Hideyoshi failed to conquer Korea.
11. The prefix *otogi-* harks back to a body of popular tales circulating in oral, visual, and textual media since the Muromachi period (1336–1573), referred to as *otogizōshi* from the eighteenth century. The combination of *otogi-* with *hanashi* (story), and the explicit connotation ‘for children’ is considered to be Iwaya’s invention (Mukōgawa 1993, 334, Koyama-Siebert 2015, 417). However, the term already appears in the illustrated book *Hiyoshimaru tanjōki* (‘Record of Hiyoshimaru’s Beginnings’, 1867), that according to the preface is written for children ‘in the vein of an old woman’s *otogibanashi*’.
12. These are the only concrete concepts that specify ‘didactic’ in this essay, even though *kyōkunteki* has a broader meaning.
13. As with the English ‘spirited child’, *wanpaku-mono* might also be read as a euphemism. In Akutagawa Ryūnosuke’s parodic *Momotarō* (1924), the old couple that raises Momotarō tries to get rid of this insufferable *wanpaku-mono* by giving him immediately everything he needs for his quest of conquering demon island.

Funding

Isaac Alfred Ailion Foundation PhD scholarship.

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