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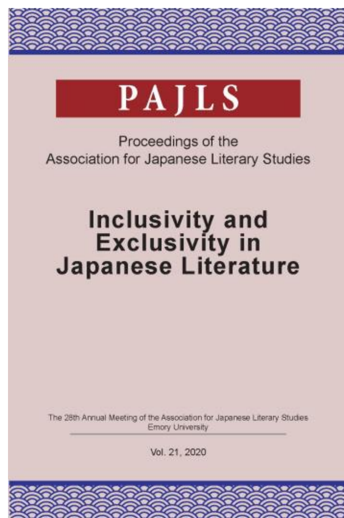

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CHILDREN AS CULTURAL IMAGINARY: THE MAKING OF "LITTLE CITIZENS" THROUGH *SHŌNEN SEKAI*, 1895–1914

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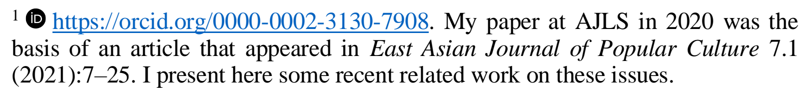
How and why did the political discourse of "little citizens" (小国民, *shōkokumin*) become a rhetorical tool for national mobilization and community involvement during the Meiji period (1868–1902)?[2] Despite the print media's celebration of children's citizenship and status as subjects in modern Japan, concepts of children's rights were inconsistent, as were expectations of how they should behave as "little citizens" with a political identity. This article examines the cultural construction of "little citizens" and the gendering of childhood through the medium of children's magazines. I trace how a new type of print media represented the concept of "little citizens," which was coming into social acceptance despite the fact that up to this point the notion had been poorly defined. The emergence of this concept also coincided with the certain differentiation between boys' and girls' education and interests in the new cultural milieu of capitalist modernity. Specifically, I explore how an early children's magazine titled *Shōnen sekai* (*Boys' World*, 1895–1914) created a new model of children's reading and writing to accompany a sense of national belonging that emerged in tandem with the outgrowth of publishing at the turn of the twentieth century.

During this period, the print industry experienced rapid growth and began targeting readers based on gender and age, creating separate magazines for boys and girls. Whereas the former introduced serialized adventure stories and historical novels, the latter focused on didactic tales, stories of friendship and family, and classical poetry. While the difference between boys' and girls' literature became evident, both types of magazines promoted children's sense of national belonging and the mission of fashioning "little citizens." This article discusses how *Shōnen*



[1] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3130-7908. My paper at AJLS in 2020 was the basis of an article that appeared in *East Asian Journal of Popular Culture* 7.1 (2021):7–25. I present here some recent related work on these issues.

[2] Until the late Meiji period, the Chinese characters 小国民 were used for the English phrase "young nationals" or "little citizens." For example, Meiji periodicals, titled *Shōkokumin* (小国民, *Little Citizens*, 1889–1895), used 小国民 instead of 少国民 until 1895. However, from the late Meiji period, the latter use 少国民 gained currency as the written expression of "little citizens."

sekai provided a new platform where children could develop their new social identities, and how this emergent print media created the social and material conditions for the complex mobilization of children as "little citizens."

THE MAKING OF "LITTLE CITIZENS"

The shift in social and class relations during the late Meiji period refashioned the notion of childhood and gender ideologies. The Japanese industrial revolution gained momentum in the wake of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895), which ended with Japan's victory over the Qing rulers of China and exhibited the Japanese military's increasing power and influence in the East Asia region. The publishing industry expanded rapidly alongside political changes leading to Japan's transformation into a modern nation-state and the development of industrial capitalism. The increasing production of paper manufactured in the Western manner and the development of typographical technology stimulated unprecedented expansion of the print industry as a whole, including a dramatic growth in the number of children's magazines from the 1880s.

In January 1888, the first commercial children's magazine, *Shōnen'en* (*Children's Garden*, 1888–1895), was published by Yamagata Teizaburō (1859–1940). *Shōnen'en* was the pioneer that paved the way for children's magazines dedicated to cultivating "little citizens" even though the term "little citizens" had been already used in children's school textbooks. In the wake of its publication, *Nihon no shōnen* (*Japanese Boys*, 1889–1894), *Shōkokumin* (*Little Citizens*, 1889–1895), *Shōnen bunko* (*Children's Paperbacks*, 1889–1895), *Shōnen bunbu* (*Children's Academic and Physical Education*, 1890–1892), *Yōnen zasshi* (*Young Children's Magazine*, 1891–1894), *Shōnen bunshū* (*The Collection of Children's Writing*, 1895–1898), *Shōnen sekai* (*Boys' World*, 1895–1914), and *Shōnenkai* (*Boys' Sphere*, 1902–unknown) were published one after another. Girls' magazines such as *Shōjokai* (*Girls' Sphere*, 1902–1912), *Shōjo sekai* (*Girls' World*, 1906–1931), and *Shōjo no tomo* (*Girls' Friend,* 1908–1955) also appeared.

Just as education for children was under the stringent control of the Meiji state, which used it to maintain a constraining educational ideology and political system, the majority of these children's magazines cooperated with modern schools and national policy-making offices to promote the standardization of children's education and to centralize Meiji ideological doctrines and instructional policies. Children's magazines generally focused on the didactic moralizing central to state-directed

public education while meeting the growing demand for popular reading materials for enjoyment. With contributions from influential writers such as Iwaya Sazanami (1870–1933) and Kimura Shōshū (1881–1954), *Shōnen sekai* was one of the most widely circulated magazines of the late Meiji period, and aptly illustrated how children's magazines contributed to the creation of national belonging while providing literary entertainment to young readers.

Shōnen sekai published its first issue around the same time the government banned its competitors *Shōnen'en* and *Shōkokumin*. While the content of these two magazines ostensibly remained faithful in following the instructional goals set by the Meiji government, they were accused by the authorities of printing materials inappropriate for children, based on *seiron keisai* (printing political debates) and *chian bōgai* (public peace disturbance).

For example, the 1895 April issue of *Shōnen'en* introduced this message in an inconspicuous section of the magazine called "Sōen" (Grass garden), under the heading "Mr. Shibusawa's Blossom Party":

> How extravagantly opulent is the gentleman merchant who held a leisurely blossom-viewing banquet at his Asukayama villa, summoning dozens of geisha and inviting also dozens of professional entertainers –all during wartime, when people above and below are going without comforts! If they were made aware of the social responsibility the wealthy have for society, took charitable works to heart, and donated a small part of their fortune to the poor and the nation, how great would their joy be? However, it is perhaps harsh to fault the wealthy businesspeople of today for this; or even though it may not be too harsh, still it won't have any impact on them. We expect today's children to fulfill this duty in the future when they grow up.[3]

Although the editors were careful to limit their critique to wealthy merchants—and avoid an attack on political authorities—the message was met with a harsh response. The editor's disdain for "Shibusawa's merrymaking" was interpreted as a criticism of the wealthy authority. Indeed, the government ordered *Shōnen'en* to suspend its publication completely soon after this article appeared—its content evidently considered too political for a children's magazine.[4]

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[3] *Shōnen'en*, vol. 13, no. 156 (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 1895), 422.
[4] The publisher's name is the same as the magazine *Shōnen'en.*

A similar fate befell *Shōkokumin*, a sophisticated educational magazine to which prominent writers such as Kōda Rohan (1867–1947), Osanai Kaoru (1881–1928), Suzuki Miekichi (1882–1936), and Kindaichi Kyōsuke (1882–1936) often contributed and introduced a range of foreign literature. In 1895, the publication met with the state's disapproval when it voiced its frustration with the Tripartite Intervention—the diplomatic intervention of France, Germany, and Russia over the Treaty of Shimonoseki between Japan and China on April 23, 1895. As the editor of *Shōkokumin* wrote in a piece titled "Oh, Russia," in the September 1895 issue:

> Oh, the day your fathers, brothers, and uncles exerted their deadly force and sacrificed their lives was not so long ago…Oh, though the world is large, there are none so miserable as our nation's people and military officers. According to recent foreign newspapers, Russia has taken the lead in interfering with the Qing's reparations to Japan. Brave patriots are prohibited from making speeches and addressing the cabinet's responsibility; for all of Japan's blindness now, who should go ahead and say how things are of their own volition?... However, be aware, boys. Our nation's enemies do not reside inside, but outside. You should know that today's world is not based on righteous principles but on sheer force; this is exemplified by Russia, which relies on threats to push through policies in service of its selfish avarice. If we had the power, we would not be scared of anything, even if there were hundreds of countries like Russia and France.[5]

With its focus on the Tripartite Intervention, this article expresses a clear anti-Russian sentiment.[6] However, given the context, the message came across as a criticism of the Meiji government's ineffective diplomacy in the face of global competition. While just intended to draw the attention of young readers to Japan's disadvantage in the Tripartite Intervention, it invited unnecessary attention from the authorities and the magazine was ordered to suspend its publication.

While neither *Shōnen'en* nor *Shōkokumin* took issue with the government in presenting their criticism, the Meiji authorities viewed these expressions of frustration as targeted attacks against themselves. The authorities became increasingly sensitive to public opinion in the wake of

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[5] *Shōkokumin*, vol 7, no. 18 (Tokyo: Fuji shuppan, 1895), 16.
[6] Ibid.

the First Sino-Japanese War, conditioning children to become imperial subjects that would not provoke others to resist against the state's political agenda. In contrast, Hakubunkan strategically avoided presenting controversial opinions, focusing its efforts on entertaining its readers while serving as mouthpieces for educational propaganda. In response to the banning of *Shōnen'en* and *Shōkokumin*, the Current Events section in the October 1895 issue of *Shōnen sekai* published a notice titled "Oh, *Little Citizens*!":

> After an ordinance violation by *Shōnen'en*, unfortunately, *Shōkokumin* has now been suspended for sedition. Like *Shōnen sekai*, *Shōkokumin* was a child's companion. We won't be able to hear its sweet voice until such grace is enacted that might remove the suspension. Oh, *Little Citizens*![7]

It is not easy to judge the extent to which the editors of *Shōnen sekai* sympathized with their competitors. While the editors expressed sympathy for and indicated some solidarity with their banned competitors, *Shōnen sekai*—straddling commercialism and propaganda—monopolized the gap created by banning *Shōnen'en* and *Shōkokumin* throughout the late Meiji period. *Shōnen sekai* was a commercial success from the outset: selling some 1.9 million issues in 1895, 1.5 million in 1896, and two million in 1897.

Launched by Hakubunkan on January 1, 1895, *Shōnen sekai* advanced the notion of "little citizens," which was invoked from the first issue. On the first page of that issue, they referred to Japanese children as "little citizens" who would later assume power as leaders of the world: "Our child readers are not only who they were last year in terms of intellectual and ethical progress but are also about to appear on the stage of the new world as 'little citizens' of a strong nation. Oh, how glorious are we, how fortunate!" By defining their young readers' obligations in this way, the magazine aimed to cultivate individuals willing to subject themselves to an emerging set of values determined by social institutions and state authorities.

The first issue of *Shōnen sekai* presented stories of Japanese generals during the First Sino-Japanese War, notably linking their achievements to those of the famous warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537–1598), who attempted to invade the Korean peninsula at the end of the sixteenth

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[7] *Shōnen sekai*, vol.1, no. 1 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1895), 1961.

century.[8] For example, the March 1895 issue of *Shōnen sekai* introduced a story titled "Oni no namida" (The demon's tear) by Ōhashi Otoha (1869–1901).[9] It describes how the fictional general Hinomoto—known for his habits of strict discipline—found an abandoned Chinese boy on the battlefield. The small boy was afraid of the Chinese Qing military but not of Hinomoto and the other Japanese soldiers. In the end, the boy refused to be separated from Hinomoto, who fought the Qing soldiers while holding the boy.

Images of generous and robust warriors, historical figures, and generals conveyed the importance of both compassion and devotion to a master to young readers. Some educators and intellectuals admired the idea of having children internalize the role of "little citizens," which was also highlighted by editorials, pictures, and illustrations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The promotion of children's war games in *Shōnen sekai*

Children were encouraged to act out battles in their play. For example, the column "Sensō yūgi" (War Games) by Torigoe Yamahiko described how to play war games, explaining why they were educational and safe.[10] Thus,

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[8] *Shōnen sekai*, vol. 1, no. 1 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1895), 20–26.
[9] *Shōnen sekai*, vol. 1, no. 6 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1895), 533–538.
[10] In *Playing War: Children and the Paradoxes of Modern Militarism in Japan* (2017), Sabine Frühstück investigated how children and childhood served as key instruments in the mobilization and endorsement of Japan's total war efforts. Such

the magazine informed children—especially schoolboys—that they were the nation's future and suggested that they should prepare to assume the roles of soldiers or imperial subjects.[11]

The following poem by Saruyama Yoshiaki, an aspiring boy writer from Shimotsuke province [present day Tochigi Prefecture], "Waga rikukai no senshisha o" (On Our Dead Military and Naval Men) appeared in the readers' contributions section in the April 1895 issue of *Shōnen sekai*:

> This life will end one day,
> a body set to vanish.
> Harsh winds on the rugged plains of Korea
> might stamp out this life,
> But for our emperor and nation,
> without a moment's hesitation,
> It is in death that our lives bear fruit.
> Our soldiers, hardened in duty,
> With steadfast determination
> make waves to cover the world,
> Cross the mountains of Korea where tigers lie,
> and strike out to Pyongyang Castle.
> They advance to Lüshun Port
> and forget their earthly home and safety.
> Officers and soldiers work together,
> proceed to lock arms
> And stamp the will of our emperor and nation.
> Their bodies sacrificed, freely and purely.
> Their names shine glorious in every corner,
> enshrined a thousand years hence.
> Their names are radiant on high,
> shining brightly by the sun and moon.[12]

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efforts to reinforce the structures of modern militarism were particularly pronounced from the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century during Japan's formation as a nation-state and in its empire-building efforts. For example, Frühstück paid attention to the symbolic meaning of war games played by children, which were tolerated and even endorsed by schools and military authorities; children were encouraged to play these aggressive games because they would effectively enable children to prepare for Japan's war efforts in the demands of empire building (1868–1945).

[11] *Shōnen sekai*, vol. 1, no. 1 (January 1895), 51–53.

[12] *Shōnen sekai,* vol. 8 (April 1895), 800.

Written in non-traditional free verse lines, in contrast to the 5-7-5 syllable and the 5-7-5-7-7 syllable styles of classical haiku and tanka, this poem was printed shortly after the First Sino-Japanese War. The poem was nothing extraordinary; it was similar to numerous other contributors' poems and essays published in *Shōnen sekai* in that it plainly expressed a child's nationalistic sentiments and admiration for Japanese soldiers on the battlefield. But what is striking here is the way the boy poeticized the sacrifice of Japanese imperial soldiers for the emperor as the honored moment in which one could finally identify oneself as an essential subject of the nation. By fabricating a beautiful fiction of loyal imperial subjects with an inflated sense of patriotism, the poem filled the gap between the collective aesthetic imagination and individual suffering, transforming the image of death into a glorious sacrifice for imperial Japan.

The young Saruyama's poem exemplifies how child readers and writers like him identified with the notion of "little citizens." Naive as it may appear, the poem demonstrates how children were encouraged to nurture and internalize their desires to become loyal subjects of imperial Japan in the Meiji period, building a strong connection between one's identity as an individual and as a subject of the nation. The sense of national belonging and the value of imperial subjects' deaths on behalf of the nation were celebrated by *Shōnen sekai* to reinforce an alluring fictive narrative that solidifies groups and national identities in physical and imaginative space.

Another poem from the readers' contributions section is the following, "Chūshi no haka" (The Grave of a Loyal Soldier), which shows the way in which children were encouraged to mourn and admire Japanese soldiers and sailors who died for the nation.

> Chilly winds over the wastelands of Tang,
> the fluttering of pampas grass.
> Bearing a red sunset on their wings,
> even the crows mourn as they return.
> A wooden marker on the grave,
> exposed to rain and faded by sun,
> Wistful and short-lived, once dark black ink
> letters inscribed can be seen no longer.
> An able-bodied man of the Empire,
> his body sacrificed for his nation.
> With hot, steadfast conviction;
> his bones buried, lonesome where they rest.
> At night, the frozen heart of winter,

the deep shadow of a half moon.
Light the grave of a loyal soldier
Light the grave of a loyal soldier.[13]

This poem was contributed by a boy named Sawada Fujitarō, who lived in Musashi province, in the July 1895 issue.[14] While expressing reverence for the dead soldier, it also conveys a sense of sorrow. By highlighting an individual's sacrifice for the nation as a privileged moment, the poem acknowledges the overwhelming feeling of pathos associated with impermanence in human life. A shared sense of devotion to the nation bound the soldiers to young boys, affirming the need to preserve the memories of their sacrifice and recall them in aesthetic forms.

In contrast, the contribution by Yoshikawa Fukuma from Kōchi, "Nihon danji" (Japanese Men), took a stricter stance. The poem conveys the sense that "we are all in this together," soldiers and children alike:

A warrior from the land of the rising sun devotes his body to the emperor,
clads his heart with loyalty and bravery,
and steps into the thick of the battle without hesitation,
crushing those Qing soldiers who stand against them,
like dew shed from grass.
Should they fail to
force a surrender at the gates,
they swear in their hearts that they will not return alive;
thus they strike out toward the stronghold of Beijing and continue their advance.
Oh, how brave are the hearts of Japanese men, how brave.[15]

Yoshikawa simply praised Japanese soldiers' courage and loyalty to express a sense of the soldiers' strong determination and patriotism. An individual's life was linked to the nation, and his death would be represented as a meaningful sacrifice for the emperor; his soul was ultimately incorporated into the romantic imagination.

As these exaggerated collective romantic imaginings of child readers show, in order to confirm the mission of "little citizens," it became vital

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[13] *Shōnen sekai*, vol.1, no.14 (July 1895), 1454.
[14] The Musashi province includes today's metropolitan area in Tokyo, most of Saitama Prefecture, and part of Kanagawa Prefecture.
[15] *Shōnen sekai,* vol.1. no.8 (April 1895), 800.

for children, especially boy writers and readers, to create fictional narratives in which Japanese men could identify themselves with the nation. The readers of *Shōnen sekai* did not necessarily know each other, and they may not have even known any real soldiers; but they all identified as part of the same nation.

Not only did *Shōnen sekai* allow children to explore their ideas, it also enabled a collective formulation of a sense of national belonging while at the same time generating a sentiment of solidarity against Others. Thus, the nationalist discourses that emerged from the magazine reflected racist and prejudiced views of external Others as the basis for Japanese subjects' newly constructed collective identities. Like other print media at that time, *Shōnen sekai's* narratives often rationalized Japan's imperialism and colonial expansion through the demonization of external Others as dangerous, uncivilized, and unenlightened.

In "*Shōnen sekai* to dokusho suru shōnen-tachi," (*Boys' World* and Boy Readers), modern historian Narita Ryūichi offers a succinct description of the systematic way in which *Shōnen sekai*'s editors consistently differentiated themselves from others. Narita notes:

> *Shōnen sekai* delivered its messages in five ways. The first was the topic of war, the second was historical narrative (essays on history), the third was writing and poetry, the fourth was uncivilized "darkness" (*ankoku*) and race, and the fifth was home and poverty. The first to fourth points were made up of messages confirming how unified "we" (*wareware*) were, while the fifth explored the differences among "us."[16]

The process involved in constructing community and creating imagery associated with the national-subject in the modern period has been discussed extensively, most notably: Benedict Anderson's (1982) "imagined communities," Eric Hobsbawm's (1983) "invention of tradition," and Maurice Blanchot's (1984) "the unavowable community."[17] Narita draws on these discussions to further illuminate the emergence of "Others" within "ourselves."

Distinguishing external "Others" from "us" was a common practice in imperial Japan during the late nineteenth century. Despite the Japanese

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[16] Narita Ryūichi, *Kindai toshi kūkan no bunka keiken* (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2003), 115.

[17] Building on Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities," Narita illuminates the way in which "the homogeneous empty spaces" stimulated distinctions between us and "others."

government's attempts to homogenize and unify its nationals (*kokumin*), the population was nonetheless diverse. It was not really possible to eliminate diversity; differences persisted in economic status, education, ideologies, ethnicity, gender, etc. While the process of unification occurred in the early stages of nation-state building and the development of urban spaces, the tension between standardization and de-centralization remained and stimulated a self-perpetuating process of identity reinvention.

This shift led to the process of othering that *Shōnen sekai* took part in through its demonizing of difference. As Narita's analysis of "home and poverty" shows, *Shōnen sekai* instructed young readers to live an "enlightened" (*bunmeika*) life, and not to fall into primitive living conditions reverting to premodern ways. The publication sought to present specific instructions on how this might be achieved through articles featuring stories that explained how to live as good "little citizens" by differentiating oneself from those who lived in degradation or fell behind, as well as how to distinguish good citizens from bad ones. A consistent message was maintained: it was vital to become a civilized person at first, and then to confidently self-identify as a "little citizen" rather than a juvenile delinquent who failed to live up to one's obligations to nation and family.

Narita also adds the aspects of gender to what he calls the system of differentiation. The magazine initially assumed a shared culture and community among its readership, with the term *shōnen* (少年, boys) used to designate all children between the ages of six and seventeen.[18] Yet, the differences in the reading practices between girls and boys became evident when *Shōnen sekai* created a column for girls, called *shōjo-ran* (girls' section). Eventually, the content of the magazine was divided into three groups: *shōnen* (boys), *shōjo* (girls), and *yōnen* (young children). These additional sections were then scrapped, and the magazine exclusively targeted a young male readership; the term *shōnen* came to refer only to boys.

Indeed, by the late Meiji period, gender became an important category of *Shōnen sekai's* program of establishing its readers' conception of difference. According to Kume Yoriko, the creation of the section for girls formed a communal reading space that excluded girls as "Others," making a self-identification of male "little citizens" with hegemonic force.[19]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Kume Yoriko, *"Shōjo shōsetsu" no seisei: jendā poritikusu no seiki* (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2013), 111–115.

Indeed, this column could also be viewed as exemplifying a gender-based cultural practice through which boys came to draw a distinction between Others (i.e., girls) and themselves. *Shōnen sekai* is a remarkable example of how new magazines for children began to create separate spheres for boys and girls, in tandem with the development of the military draft system, gender-based education, and print technology.

Yet, *Shōnen sekai*'s section for girls did not preclude girls from being "little citizens." Instead, the *shōjo-ran* promoted frugality and hard work in making girls into female "little citizens." Young female readers were instructed to aspire to become *ryōsai kenbo* (good wives and wise mothers), to understand Japan's position in the world, and to support the efforts of the nation-state. To strengthen Japan's economy, girls were advised to reconstruct their national identity as "little citizens" in children's magazines.

Despite its presentation of girls being highly valued as emblematic of civilization and enlightenment, the print media in late Meiji treated girls as "Others" excluding them both from the world of boys, as well as from that of mature adults. The *shōjo-ran* of *Shōnen sekai* thus highlighted how girls came to be understood as newly emergent "little citizens" who were different from boys, evidencing an intricate oscillation between the alienation and liberation of girls from boys' culture. Hence, the departure of girls from boys' reading communities as demonstrated in *Shōnen sekai* showed the process of evolving gender ideologies that confirmed both girls' subjugation and independence from the mainstream of children's culture, presenting fluctuating representational agency of Japanese girls prior to the development of girls' magazines.[20]

Overall, newly emerged children's magazines such as *Shōnen sekai* became instrumental in their reading communities by acting as what Michel Foucault (1926–1984) would call a modern disciplinary power that coerced Japanese children to understand the role of loyal imperial subjects. [21] Through their representation of "little citizens," these magazines became instrumental in their reading communities by connecting children and the nation, while instilling the concept of "little citizens" based on gender into the readers' consciousness.

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[20] I use the term "representational agency" because I believe children's agency was something discursively constructed or represented through cultural production and literary works. While their agency was vibrantly represented in print media, it is not easy for adults to imagine their "real" agency.
[21] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

CONCLUSION

This article demonstrates how notions of nation-state formation and the representation of "little citizens" were inseparable in the print media during the Meiji period. How children and childhood were represented as "little citizens" influenced socio-political and economic structures. Simultaneously, the educational objective of the Meiji state's national projects had a significant impact on images of gendered "little citizens" in print media. Children's magazines tried to form "little citizens;" boys and girls sought to see themselves as national subjects belonging to and as participants in the national body. Becoming a "little citizen" entailed understanding what Japanese citizens should do, what part children played in the nation, and their role in its future.

To be sure, as publications for children of affluent families, magazines such as *Shōnen sekai* maintained a sophisticated appearance associated with modern urban culture. In addition, these magazines welcomed and facilitated open communication between readers and production staff. The readers' columns of children's magazines provided a platform for child readers, in which they created unique group identities, interacted with each other, and expressed their opinions and ideas. In a sense, by granting children access to print media, these magazines had the capacity to enable a successful journey into imaginary spaces wherein children formed autonomy against political constraints and public control. As we have seen, however, these potentially emancipatory outlets were subsumed into the matrix of "disciplinary power," in which the authoritarian power and its opposites were intertwined with each other to produce children's representational agency.[22] For example, the partial children's liberation these magazines brought about did not change the fact of their oppression; their normalization did not preclude the act of othering. The disciplinary power of children's magazines encompassed the idea of promoting a valuable and healthy body that would be maintained, represented, regulated, gendered, and imbued with meanings and values in the modern period.

To put it simply, I argue that rather than expressing natural resistance against their social position, children's reading and writing practices were a means through which they were simultaneously emancipated from and regulated by the power within their everyday practices. These practices provided a way through which children found a subjective position in a nation by being subjected to the power within, rather than against, particular sets of social and cultural restrictions. While children's media

[22] Ibid.

created communities of readers and writers, this process was neither complete because of its propaganda purpose nor actually as democratic as it superficially appeared to be because it concealed the workings of disciplinary power. That is to say, editorial boards of children's magazines were instrumental in formulating both the style and practice of writing that children wrote and read.

The representation of "little citizens" in these magazines highlighted the invisible arena of modern disciplinary power and the new control system that half-consciously regulated Japanese children's minds and bodies through literary imagination. Each child's imagination became a field of collective desire that could expand endlessly, while the human body—and its sensations—moved into a new frontier.

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