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# Ogawa Mimei's Children's Stories: A Case Study of the Rise of Childhood in the Context of Westernization and Japanese Modernization

Alexandra E. Kint

*Bucknell University*, aek010@bucknell.edu

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**OGAWA MIM EI'S CHILDREN'S STORIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE RISE OF CHILDHOOD IN  
THE CONTEXT OF WESTERNIZATION AND JAPANESE MODERNIZATION**

By

**Alexandra E. Kint**

A Proposal Submitted to the Honors Council

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Approved by:

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Adviser: James Mark Shields

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Co-Adviser: Katherine Faull

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Department Chairperson: John Hunter

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>PREFACE</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>THE MEIJI PERIOD (1868-1912)</b>	<b>13</b>
Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japanese Borders	13
Shift from Feudal Groups to Social Classes	15
Ethics	16
Religion	18
Schools	20
Children and Childhood	23
Western Literature in Japan	25
<b>HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S WORKS ARRIVE IN JAPAN</b>	<b>28</b>
Ogai Mori's Translation of <i>The Improvisatore</i>	28
Hans Christian Andersen's Children's Stories in Japan	29
Andersen's Popularity in Japan Increases	29
<b>OGAWA MIMEI'S WORLD AND THE RISE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE</b>	<b>31</b>
The Proletarian Literature Movement	32
Ogawa's Participation	34
The Proletarian Children's Literature Movement	35
Ogawa Focuses on Children's Stories	36
<b>ANALYSIS OF OGAWA'S CHILDREN'S STORIES</b>	<b>37</b>
Westernization	37
Class Conflict	45
Nature and Civilization	54
Religion	59
Children and Childhood	71
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>81</b>

## ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I examine the influences of westernization, the tension between Japanese modernity and tradition, and the stories of Hans Christian Andersen on Ogawa Mimei's children's stories. I begin the body of my thesis with a brief historical background of Japan, beginning with the start of the Meiji period in 1868. Within the historical section, I focus on societal and cultural elements and changes that pertain to my thesis. I also include the introduction of Hans Christian Andersen in Japan. I wrap up the historical section by a description of Ogawa's involvement in the Japanese proletarian literature movement and the rise of the Japanese proletarian children's literature movement.

Then, I launch into an analysis of Ogawa's works categorized by thematic elements. These elements include westernization, class conflict, nature and civilization, religion and morals, and children and childhood. When relevant, I also compare and contrast Ogawa's stories with Andersen's. In the westernization section, I show how some of Ogawa's stories demonstrate contact between Japan and the West. In the Class Conflict section, I discuss how Ogawa views class through a socialist lens, whereas Andersen does not dispute class distinctions, but encourages his readers to attempt an upward social climb. In the nature and civilization section, I show how Ogawa and Andersen share common opinions on the impact of civilization on nature. In the religion and morals section, I show how Ogawa incorporates religion, including Christianity, into

his works. Andersen utilizes religion in a more overt manner in order to convey morals to his audience. Both authors address religious topics like the concept of the afterlife. Finally, in children and childhood, I demonstrate how both Ogawa and Andersen treat their child protagonists and use them and their situations to instruct their readers.

Through this case study, I show how westernization and the tensions between Japanese modernization and tradition led to the rise of the proletarian children's literature movement, which is exemplified by Ogawa's stories. The emergence of the proletarian children's literature movement is an indication of the establishment of a new concept of childhood in Japan. Writers like Ogawa Mimei attempted to write children's stories that represented the new Japanese culture that was a result of adapting Western ideals to fit Japanese society. Some of Ogawa's stories are a direct commentary on his opinion of Japanese interaction with the West. By comparing Ogawa's and Andersen's stories, I demonstrate how Ogawa borrows certain Western elements and possibly responds directly to Andersen. Ogawa also addresses some of the same topics as Andersen, yet their reactions are not always the same. What I find in my analysis supports my thesis that Ogawa is able to maintain Japanese tradition while infusing his children's stories with Western and modern elements. In doing so, he reflects a largely popular social and cultural practice of his time.

## PREFACE

I would like to preface this thesis by acknowledging my limitations. I face a “crisis” of otherness, as described by Sanford Budick in his essay, “Crises of Alterity: Cultural Untranslatability and the Experience of Secondary Otherness.” Budick asserts that the crisis of alterity, or otherness, is “brought about by trying to imagine, and necessarily failing to imagine, “the other”” (Budick and Iser 14).<sup>1</sup> Unavoidably, I view Japan as the other. As a non-Japanese speaker who does not have firsthand experience of Japanese culture, I must rely on English translations of Japanese texts. While reading these translations, it is imperative for me not to homogenize Western and Japanese cultures. But while avoiding a complete homogenization of Japan and the West, I also consciously seek out similarities and discrepancies between Andersen’s and Ogawa’s stories. For example, in Ogawa Mimei’s<sup>2</sup> “A Doll Stolen,” the translator utilizes the word “forgive” (DS 9). In my experience, the concept of forgiveness derives from the Christian tradition. Blindly following my analytical instincts, I hastily labeled the presence of the word “forgive” in Ogawa’s story as proof of Christian influence in Japan. However, one of my thesis advisers, Professor James Shields, consulted a Japanese version of the text and informed me that the original Japanese word, *kennin*, really means “to tolerate” or “bear patiently.” There is certainly a possibility of similar transgressions in this thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> This notion also concerns Japanese translations of Western texts, a topic that I address later in the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, I will follow traditional Japanese practice with regard to names, with the exception of the names of Japanese-Americans—i.e. surname followed by personal name.



As well as translations, I have had to rely on English books on Japanese social history and culture. Budick claims that the crisis of alterity, or otherness, “entails a painful sorting out among the elements of what we consider to be reality, so that a choosing or deciding seems unavoidable” (Budick and Iser 5). I feel that gaining some knowledge of Japanese social and cultural history leading up to and including the time that Ogawa was writing his children’s stories is necessary. I provide a brief overview of Japan’s social and cultural history below, beginning with the start of the Meiji period and address aspects of Japanese culture and society that pertain specifically to my thesis.

## INTRODUCTION

During the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japanese society was undergoing an extreme upheaval. The Japanese were being influenced by Western culture during a time of crucial transitions. Some of these changes included new definitions of social class, heavy government involvement in the educational system, and the development of a concept of childhood. These same trends had already begun in the Western world. However, while imbibing Western culture, most Japanese leaders—including politicians and intellectuals—simultaneously refused to assimilate to Western ideals. They accomplished this by taking Western ideals and adapting them to function in relation to Japanese society and culture. We also see this process in the creative arts, including literature, where Western influence was also strong.

For the purposes of this thesis, I have chosen to examine the literary works of Ogawa Mimei (1882-1961). As a modern writer and socialist, his stories tackle issues of his time yet still embody traditional Japanese aesthetics. He is also an important figure in the children's literature movement in Japan. I selected Danish author Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875) as a comparison because, like Ogawa, Andersen wrote original stories instead of reinventing traditional narratives. Andersen's stories were also used in Japanese schools as teaching tools and became popular in Japan as representatives of Western culture, so there is a good chance that Ogawa was exposed to them at an early

age.<sup>3</sup> Andersen published his stories in the mid- to late nineteenth century, while Ogawa published most of his works in the early twentieth century. Both writers were born in the midst of radical social change, and are truly products of their environments. Moreover, the several decades between their respective publications coincides with the inevitable time lag of transmission of information from the West to Japan.

In order to compare the stories, yet keep the focus on Ogawa, I analyze primarily Ogawa's stories by thematic elements. Most of the stories that I use come from a collection translated by Morita Michiko, with assistance from Reverend John C. Murrett, helped Morita with the translations. I use Andersen's stories as a representation of Western ideals and compare and contrast them with Ogawa's tales when relevant. Before turning to the literary analysis, I provide a basic historical background from the Meiji period to the early Showa period (1926-1989) to create a context for Ogawa's stories.

I argue that Ogawa, even if he did not read Andersen's stories, was influenced by Western culture and created tales that are at once traditionally Japanese yet contain both modern and Western elements. Even if his stories attempt to transmit some sort of lesson, they are caught between traditional, established values, and the influx of westernization and modernity. So, to what extent are his stories Japanese, and to what

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<sup>3</sup> I have not found any concrete evidence indicating that Ogawa read Andersen's stories. However, due to the overlap of Ogawa's childhood years and the presence of Andersen's stories in Japanese school textbooks, there is a high chance that Ogawa was taught Andersen's stories.

extent are they Western? In order to create a successful model, the stories must encompass both the traditional and the new as they existed in the Japanese context at the time.

## THE MEIJI PERIOD (1868-1912)

### Commodore Perry and the Opening of Japanese Borders

During the Edo, or Tokugawa, period (1603-1868), Japan practiced *sakoku*, or “self-imposed isolation”. They experienced almost no foreign contact, whether through trade, missionaries, or foreign representatives. However, the Japanese maintained contact with the Dutch throughout the Edo period (Dorsey 61-2). A new term was established, *rangaku*, which means “Dutch, or Western, studies” (Wright 24). To the Japanese, the Dutch were a symbol of the alien, particularly the West. Commodore Perry’s landing in Japan in 1853 was only the first in a series of events that led to the opening of Japan’s borders and treaties with several foreign powers. The Meiji Restoration in 1868<sup>4</sup> ended the Edo era and ushered in the Meiji era (Reitan 1). The initial efforts of the Meiji government influenced Japanese citizens to desire increased contact with the West.

The Meiji period was a time of uncertainty for Japan as a nation. Compared to previous eras, the Japanese were experiencing a torrent of new information from the West. Kumiko Kitagawa claims that the Meiji period was a time of “trial and error, [with many people] wondering how to respond and amalgamate these drastic changes,”

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<sup>4</sup> “The year 1868, when the imperial court regained political power from the ‘feudal’ Tokugawa government, is customarily regarded as the beginning of the modern age in Japan. The new rulers then launched Japan on a path of militarization and industrialization, effecting a revolution rather than a simple transference of power or a gradual transition from the ‘feudal’ to the ‘modern’ age” (Hane 4).

(Kitagawa 74). The Japanese were faced with a new challenge: to what extent should they incorporate ideas from the West and to what extent should they preserve their traditions? Mikiso Hane, the author of *Peasants, Rebels, Women, and Outcastes*, claims that “the proponents of Westernization, or modernization, in Japan were primarily interested in Western science, technology, and weaponry, not the West’s moral or political ideals” (Hane 10). However, I would nuance his point to read that, at least by the end of the Meiji period, Japan was *more* interested in adapting Western ideals in order to renew their own society and culture, rather than ignoring these ideals altogether. I think that John Dorsey summarizes well the general outlook of Meiji Japan: “...the sudden rush to increase contact with the West was undertaken ambivalently by many as a means of defending Japan against the West, indeed as a means of keeping the West at bay” (Dorsey 63). The Japanese imbibed all types of Western information, including moral and political ideologies. I agree with Dorsey’s claim because of the rise of the so-called Civilization and “Enlightenment” (*bunmei kaika*) movement, the presence of Christianity in Japan, the development of a universal education system, and the emergence of the Japanese proletarian literature movement, among other examples. All of these show a conscious “hybridization” at work.

According to Dorsey, the term, “Meiji,” can be interpreted to mean “enlightened government” (Dorsey 61). The translated term, “enlightened,” must be interpreted further in order to better portray the state of Japan at the time. Some Japanese intellectuals and government authorities viewed Enlightenment as being synonymous

with westernization because they viewed the West as being more civilized, and therefore superior. They fought for the abolition of traditional culture, which derived from Shintō, Buddhist, and Confucian principles. Opponents of these Enlightenment thinkers argued against westernization based on the concept that westernization was only a “superficial process,” and could not be exchanged seamlessly with modernization. Although westernization was certainly a part of the Civilization and Enlightenment movement, many Japanese retained an aversion to conforming completely to Western ideals. Dorsey explains, “It was generally agreed that Japan had to modernize, had to develop and improve its society in order to establish its place in the world order, after more than 250 years of keeping the world at bay with the policy of *sakoku*...” (61). Though split into factions, it seems that intellectual, government, and religious authorities felt the need to address Westernization (61-65). In the following section, I will outline several changes that Japan underwent as a response to westernization.

#### Shift from Feudal Groups to Social Classes

One major change throughout Japan was the banishment of the feudal system by 1871. The previous feudal groups were reorganized into *kazoku*, “peers,” consisting of *samurai*, peasants, and artisans, *shizoku*, “gentry,” and *heimin*, “commoners” (Hane 14). Notably, this classification system was not intended for legal reasons, but justified as a means of identifying citizens in population registers. Legally, any person of any class now had the right to pursue any profession and to live where they desired (14).

However, peasants were indoctrinated by the government, which maintained that farming was the most important industry in the state, and that industrialization in urban areas was a cause of moral corruption. Peasant children were also taught that cohesion of the family unit was of the utmost importance. However, the strict conditions of filial piety often led to tension, resentment, and even hatred between family members (66-9).

There also existed tension between the newly-classified groups. Many of those who had been a part of higher feudal classes, such as the *samurai*, refused to exist on the same plane as peasants. On their end, peasants also had difficulty in changing their own perceptions of inferiority (Hane 14-5). The people of Japan struggled to accept their placement into new, distinct classes, which often culminated in social conflict.

## Ethics

At the beginning of the Meiji period, the Japanese government found itself trying to quell rebellions and civil war, while resisting the threat of colonization by Western powers. Out of this social chaos arose the desire for a new model of ethics. According to Richard Reitan, “[m]oral unity became a prerequisite for the national solidarity needed to quell internal turmoil and to defend Japan’s sovereignty” (Reitan 1). In order to preserve Japan against the onslaught of foreigners, the state needed to become a unified body that shared a common set of morals and ethics. Once the government



decided to focus on moral unity, they needed to agree upon a source from which to draw ethics. There were several social and religious groups from which to choose. (1)

One influential figure in this process was the Emperor Meiji's tutor, Motoda Eifu. Motoda held fast to Confucian ideals and believed that the best way to regulate westernization was by setting up the emperor as the head, or symbol, of moral instruction for the masses. In 1878, under the influence of his mentor, the young emperor addressed the nation, saying that the Japanese people needed a moral education above all. In an imperial injunction, he declared that Confucian principles, including righteousness, filial piety and loyalty, should be the cornerstone of this moral education (Hane 56). Not everyone accepted his decree.

The first few decades of the Meiji period also saw the development of the academic study of ethics, known as *rinrigaku*. These academics claimed that they were approaching *rinrigaku* with a subjective eye, yet Reitan argues that they were only trying to advance their own "value positions" (Reitan 1-2). At this point in time, *rinrigaku* was thought of as being intertwined with the concept of civilization. The working model of *bunmei* (civilization) was that of the Western world. Like the Japanese Enlightenment thinkers, they viewed Western civilization as being superior. The *rinrigaku* scholars took it upon themselves to bring Japan closer to Western "Civilization" to be able to compete with the West. One aspect of this project that is important to note is that it was not induced only by Western imposition, but rather instigated by Japanese scholars (1-2).

*Rinrigaku* academics established a dichotomy between *bunmei kaika* and the *gumin*, or “the foolish masses” (Reitan 2). The practitioners of *rinrigaku* created two goals: 1. Develop new education and legal systems through which to educate the *gumin*; 2. Eliminate traditional knowledge and social norms and practice that were previously the norm for the *gumin*. Reitan describes *rinrigaku* as “a mechanism for social control by providing philosophical justification for the suppression of ‘socially disruptive’ thought and practices that ran counter to the needs of the state” (2). The goals of the *rinrigaku* academics ran parallel with the goals of the Meiji government. In order to achieve moral unity, Japan as a whole needed to function under a common, established set of rules and morals. Reitan argues that *rinrigaku* was mostly successful and that “the importance of self-sacrifice for the social whole and the necessity of preserving the state and ‘traditional values’ came to be widely naturalized” (154). Because Reitan places “traditional values” in quotations, I assume that he means the new set of moral values, which did include some traditional values, but increasingly yoked to the imperial cause. Because the Japanese government wanted to protect the state, it had to create a balance between modernizing the ethics system while preserving traditional morals. Many of these traditional values stemmed from the existence of established religions in Japan.

Religion

The *rinrigaku* academics competed with religious leaders and institutions for control over the authority to dictate a set of common morals for the state. Within the religious group, there were struggles for advancement between the supporters of Shintō, Buddhism, and Confucianism. As the Meiji period advanced, Christianity also became a factor in the fight for authority (Reitan 57-65). Dorsey states that for the Japanese, “belonging to, believing in, or participating in the rites of several religions poses no intellectual or spiritual conflict” (Dorsey 66). However, it seems that the state, *rinrigaku* scholars, and religious authorities thought differently. Reitan names this battle, “the struggle over interiority” (Reitan 57). *Rinrigaku* practitioners claimed that, in order for moral unity to be achieved, the government must act as the driving force. Religious authorities saw this extent of government involvement as an attempt to control an individual’s conscience, which ultimately violated the individual (57).

Both parties endeavored to portray religion as they wanted *gumin* to view it. *Rinrigaku* scholars wanted to replace ethics derived from religious ideals with ethics driven by reason and scientific thought. They wanted to represent religion as being irrational, and therefore as a body that was detrimental to society and social unity. Religious apologists tried to capture the same type of authority by utilizing similar academic methods. Reitan claims that the apologists were unsuccessful because they used the same sort of language as the *rinrigaku* academics, which contributed indirectly to the promotion of *rinrigaku* (Reitan 57-8).

Another school of thought was called National Learning (*kokugaku*), which began to emerge in the Tokugawa period. Shintō priests supported this school of thought because it “seemed to offer a way out of Shintō’s centuries-old enforced subordination to Buddhism” (Hardacre 17). Many Shintō priests supported one man, Hirata Atsutane (1776-1843) in particular. Because of the support of Shintō priests, National Learning fused with spirituality and greatly contributed to the development of State Shintō. After Commodore Perry’s arrival, National Learning scholars, including the influential Mutobe Yoshika (1806-1863), called for a restoration of the Department of Divinity, which would impose a common mode of deity worship that would overtake local religious practices. Helen Hardacre explains, “These Shintō figures desired that the Department of Divinity be simultaneously the highest administrative organ of government and a religious entity” (18). Thus, State Shintō came into being. These *kokugaku* Shintō authorities were not the only influence on the development of a new moral and ethical system in Japan. Christian missionaries and Japanese Christians founded schools and universities throughout the country. Inevitably, their views spread as well (Dorsey 66).

### Schools

In 1872, the Meiji government created a new national education system. Ideally, attendance for three to four years would have been mandatory, but the state did not enforce attendance until years later. These new schools posed problems for the peasant class. First, there was a tuition charge that depleted significantly their annual

income. Second, while the children were in school, they were unable to help their parents at home. Although the government was lax about collecting tuition fees and maintaining the attendance policy in the beginning, peasants were so angry that they sometimes burned down the school buildings (Hane 20-1). Eventually, the state managed to increase attendance and the amount of tuition fees that they were receiving. By 1878, forty percent of Japanese children were enrolled in the new school system, and the numbers climbed from there. However, even up until the last decade of the nineteenth century, twice the amount of boys than girls went to school because many villagers did not consider educating their daughters to be a priority (Hane 21).

The schools were further limited by subject material. As they were used as a medium for nationalistic indoctrination, the government tightly controlled what students were learning. Emperor Meiji believed that peasant children should not be taught subjects that had no practical value. In the eyes of the Meiji government, the newly established set of morals, which would unify the nation, was a top priority. The Ministry of Education published a textbook about morals and removed other, distracting, texts from the curriculum. One subject that was not discarded was English, which was often taught through reading the Christian Bible (Dorsey 66). Later, foreign teachers, such as Lafcadio Hearn (1850-1904)<sup>5</sup>, “labored to instill into... Japanese

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<sup>5</sup> Lafcadio Hearn was a writer and journalist who spent the last fourteen years of his life in Japan. He wrote many books about Japan and translated traditional narratives. He also taught in several Japanese schools, including an English literature professorship at the Imperial University in Tokyo. He married a Japanese woman and was also known as Koizumi Yakumo. (Lewis v-xii)

students an understanding of the history and traditions of English literature and an appreciation of its masterpieces” (Lewis xi).

In *Peasants, Rebels, Women, and Outcastes*, Hane mentions a set of instructions to elementary-school teachers in 1881: “...foster the spirit of reverence for the emperor and love of country, purify, and refine customs, enrich the people’s lives, and advance the peace and well-being of the nation” (Hane 57). In the year 1886, Minister of Education Mori Arinori announced that education should mold the students to serve the country, rather than individual interests. He added militaristic elements to the school curriculums, to the point where male students wore army-inspired uniforms, which fostered a militaristic nationalism in Japanese young people. Students were instructed to recite the Imperial Rescript on Education (1889), which described how children should always be loyal to their ancestors, families, and friends, promote the public good, and defend and maintain the state and the imperial throne (57-8).

Because an idea of childhood was still being developed at this time, the government had not yet tailored the national curriculum to fit the educational needs of children. In his article, “Japanese Childhood, Modern Childhood: The Nation-State, the School, and 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Globalization,” Brian Platt cites Tasaki, who argues that the “spread of education in early modern Japan is not necessarily evidence of a ‘rich culture of childhood,’ since the actual practice of schooling in early modern Japan was not, for the most part, oriented towards the specific needs and abilities of children” (Platt 969). However, the Japanese view of childhood was transforming rapidly.

## Children and Childhood

At the beginning of the Meiji period, there was no set concept of childhood or of children having distinct needs from adults. As a result of the importance of preserving the family unit as a whole (derived from Confucian tradition), sometimes individual children were sacrificed. The traditional practice of infanticide in peasant families in order to be able to provide for the existing family members persisted until around 1885. Another popular method of getting rid of infants was child abandonment. Poor villagers would leave their babies in front of the homes of wealthy farmers, with the hope that the new family would raise them as their own. Peasants also sent their children away to work in factories or sold their daughters to brothels or geisha houses (Hane 27). Some adults bought children, especially young boys, to help on their farms or fishing businesses (209).

During the early Meiji period, there were no actual public institutions that distinguished children from adults. Public schools and the legal and penal systems regarded Japanese children as Japanese adults. Some private schools, however, were established with children primarily in mind (968). Children were not the focus of popular culture, as is shown by ethnographer Yanagita Kunio (1875-1962), who found that “games and folk tales uncovered in his research revealed an absence of child-directed entertainment in pre-modern village society” (Platt 968).

Although the new public education system did not cater to children's needs, the very presence of these schools and the children attending them introduced a novel way of observing and thinking about children in Japan. However, the perceived importance of childhood and the idea that childhood needed to be addressed, as well as cherished, did not come about until the 1890s. It developed further in the first few decades of the twentieth century (Platt 975). Platt critically examines the motives behind this shift. He states, "Childhood came to acquire special importance as the period of life during which that socialization could be undertaken most effectively, one that needed to be understood and managed in order to improve and regulate society" (Platt 970). One radical change in the education system that occurred was the refinement of curricula according to the age of the child. Educators pushed for new teaching techniques that would appeal more to children, based on their skills and abilities. The state also decided that most parents were unqualified to instill lessons and morals in their children, so the brunt of the responsibility was assigned to teachers. Children were pushed to almost the opposite end of the spectrum; rather than being empty vessels that could function as adults, they were considered to be very sensitive and impressionable (970-5).

Social reformers' new discourse broadcast by means of mass media exploded in the 1890s and brought the plight of children all over Japan to public attention. There were outcries against poor children in the recently developed urban slums, who were deprived both of material wealth and morally sound role models. From 1912 to 1926, the number of day care centers, which had been created by Christian converts and were



devoted to poor urban youth, grew from 15 to 273 nationwide. Some day care workers influenced parents by taking families on field trips together to encourage parent-child bonding. By 1926, the first year of the Showa period, these centers had spread even to some rural areas. In 1900, the Japanese government created a separate juvenile court, as well as retention centers and reformatories for young people. This was a response to Japanese activists who had brought attention to changes in the juvenile penal system in the 1890s in the United States. Laws concerning children underwent social reforms. For example, one new law decreed that no child under twelve years of age could work in a factory (Platt 977-9).

Children and childhood became a staple of Japanese society. Just as a unified system of morals was considered to be essential to the nation, so too was the condition of its children. Childrearing now became a priority. Social reformers suggested that parents should foster childhood in their children. Parents were urged to indulge their children with toys and to allow them to have their own spaces within the home, as well as time away from work. The reformers went even further, stressing the importance of nutrition and exposure to the arts. Child-oriented entertainment sprang up, as well as playgrounds (Platt 979). This entertainment included stories and entire magazines, which, as I will show below, were influenced directly by Western literature.

Western Literature in Japan

As mentioned above, Meiji Japan absorbed a substantial amount of Western information. The West was considered to be exotic, and the public increasingly craved more contact with Western culture. In response to the demand, translators provided the Japanese with many Western texts.

In his article, "The Black Hole of Culture: Japan, Radical Otherness, and the Disappearance of Difference, K. Ludwig Pfeiffer makes the claim that translation, "linguistic or cultural, is one of the most important metaphors we live by... Translation, in this train of thought, does not aim at an integral preservation of... more or less fixed or fluid identities... [b]ut... [is] conscious of its own perspectivism..." (Pfeiffer 187). The Japanese people were exposed to Western culture mostly through translation, or a Japanese interpretation of the Western works. By interpreting these works, Japanese translators infused their own ideals and perspectives, shaping the translation into a text that could be understood by the Japanese public.

Japanese translators utilized a method known as adaptive translation. J. Scott Miller, author of *Adaptations of Western Literature in Meiji Japan*, compares adaptive translation to a shrub that "is uprooted from its place of origin, transferred across time and space, and transplanted into new surroundings with the aim of making it appear as though *it has been there from the beginning*" (Miller 10). In order for the Japanese to fully understand and appreciate the Western text, the translators had to "plant" the text in a new context. This raises the question of how valid the ideas were that Japanese readers considered to be Western. If Japanese translators adapted Western texts, then

they had to eliminate some aspects of Western culture and replace them with elements of Japanese culture. Doing this would create an entirely new context that was not Western, but rather Japanese and the Japanese concept of the West. I suggest that the translators' motives and methods were akin to the government's at the outset of the Meiji period. Their desire was to absorb Western ideals without adopting them completely, which would negate their own culture.

However embracing or accepting either the translators or Japanese public were, they could not avoid the influence of Western literature. As Donald Keene succinctly states:

...translations of European literature... provided the stimulus for most new literary developments in Japan. Various Japanese critics have gone so far as to assert that the history of modern Japanese literature is no more than the history of the successive waves of influence exerted by European literature, or that the Japanese literature written after the Meiji restoration is merely a minor offshoot of modern European literature. (Keene 629)

There is no denying the influence of Western literature on modern Japanese literature. Translators held the power in their hands; they were the access points for the vast majority of the Japanese people. One translator in particular was very instrumental in bringing Western literature to Japan and increased greatly Hans Christian Andersen's popularity among an audience of all ages.

## HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN'S WORKS ARRIVE IN JAPAN

### Ogai Mori's Translation of *The Improvisatore*

Ogai Mori read a German translation of Andersen's novel, *The Improvisatore* (*Der Improvisator*, trans. Heinrich Denhardt 1876), while he studied in Germany in the 1880s<sup>6</sup>. When he returned to Japan, he undertook the endeavor of translating the work, which lasted from 1892 until 1901. In 1901, Shunyōdō published Ogai's translation, *Sokkyō shijin*, in two volumes. The translation met with great success. The text was printed in large letters, which supposedly attracted readers of all ages. By 1915, there was even a pocket edition and nine more editions of the original translation. Ogai's *Sokkyō shijin* became the first best-selling translation in modern Japanese history. Matoshi Fujisawa claims that Ogai's success derives from his creative translation method, "which... sacrifices literal fidelity according to the translator's interest. Despite the fact that Ogai's translation has many parts that stray from the original, his translation has not destroyed the original narrative quality and imagery" (Fujisawa 181). Ogai's translation is a successful example of adaptive translation. Other Japanese writers attempted to translate *The Improvisatore*, but none met the same success as Ogai (80-1). Keene asserts that Ogai's "writings exercised profound influence on later

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<sup>6</sup> The Danish version was first published in 1835. Again, Ogai Mori's use of the German translation of the Danish text raises questions about the validity of the translation. Although some aspects of Danish culture might have gotten lost in the German text, both Andersen and Denhardt participated in a shared Western culture.

Japanese authors” (Keene 355). Ogai helped to spread the name of Hans Christian Andersen throughout Japan. Even before the famous translation, however, Andersen’s works had already become embedded in Japanese culture.

#### Hans Christian Andersen’s Children’s Stories in Japan

There is some debate on when Andersen’s children’s stories were first brought to Japan. Kitagawa contends that the tales were introduced to Japan in 1886 (Kitagawa 73). Fujisawa lists the year as 1888 (Fujisawa 180). Whichever date is correct, it is established that Andersen’s stories arrived in Japan at least ten years prior to Ogai’s translation of *The Improvisatore*. According to Kitagawa, the first story by Andersen to appear in Japan, “The Little Match Girl,” was a part of the English textbook, “New National Third Reader” (Kitagawa 74). Nagashima Yoichi, however, claims that “The Emperor’s New Clothes” was the first to be translated into Japanese. (Laderrière 144). More of his stories began to be published not only in “English language texts, but also in literary magazines for grown-up readers, Christian newspapers, [and] children’s magazines in [the] Japanese language” (Kitagawa 74). In keeping with the Japanese translation method, these translations were adaptive, rather than literal. Japanese writers customized Andersen’s tales in order to make it easier for the Japanese public to accept his stories (74).

#### Andersen’s Popularity in Japan Increases

Because the efforts exerted to learn about Western culture and adapt it to Japanese society extended to Andersen's tales, he became increasingly popular among both children and adults. In 1905, as a celebration of the 100 years since his birth, seven collections of his stories were published. These became known as "Andersen's Tales." During the Meiji period, 72 out of his 156 tales were published in Japan (Kitagawa 75). In 1925, the first Andersen festival was celebrated in Tokyo as a marker of the fiftieth anniversary of his death.

Andersen was for the Japanese a model of Western civilization. Adults read Andersen in order to imbibe foreign culture and utilized his tales as an example of the new Japanese society that was forming in the Meiji period. In turn, parents and teachers exposed their children to Andersen's stories. Kitagawa writes, "In fact some of the publications had the term 'educational' attached to the titles, suggesting his tales were part of a child's education, even considered 'educational materials'" (Kitagawa 75). As mentioned above, Andersen's stories were considered to be beneficial for Meiji-era children because they demonstrated modern views. His influence in the education system grew to such a level that "[b]y the time of the next Taisho era... Andersen's tales had become firmly and clearly linked with children and education..." (75). The Japanese public, including writers, were exposed to Andersen's works through several mediums (75). His stories were published in magazines concerning children's literature. Nagashima claims that "Andersen studies were thus placed in the very centre of the

studies of children's literature in Japan, already in the 1920's" (Laderrière 152).

However, the presence of his children's stories was not the only indication of a new focus on children's literature in Japan.

The rise of children's literature began in Japan after it was already happening in the West. In the following section, I will describe its origins, beginning with the literary movements that came before. Ogawa Mimei participated in these movements before devoting himself to writing children's stories.

### **OGAWA MIMEI'S WORLD AND THE RISE OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

Ogawa Mimei was born in Niigata Prefecture in 1882, and thus had first-hand experience of the newly introduced Meiji education system. Since he would have been exposed to Western literature in school, there is a good chance that he read Andersen's stories. After studying English, he graduated from Waseda University in Tokyo in 1905 (Akiyama Preface, no pagination).

Yoshiko Akiyama, who translated some of Ogawa's stories into English, points out that Ogawa wrote over eight hundred children's stories that "are noted for the touch of humanity and love of righteousness" (Akiyama Preface). Ogawa wrote prolifically during the Taisho period (1912-1926); the bulk of his children's stories were written toward the end of Taisho and the beginning of the Showa period (1926-1989). He was well known for his participation in the Japanese socialist and proletarian movements.

## The Proletarian Literature Movement

One can trace the origins of the proletarian literature movement back to the naturalist movement in Japan.<sup>7</sup> Keene claims that naturalism is the central movement of Japanese literature of the early 1900s, following the end of the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 (Keene 220). Because of political influence from the West, particularly from Russian socialists, naturalism shifted to socialism. The Society for the Study of Socialism, *Shakaishugi Kenkyūkai*, was formed in 1898. The aim of the Society was to study the tenets of socialism and to determine if they could, and should, be applied to Japan. Socialist literature began to appear in Japan in the early 1900s. One writer, Takuboku Ishikawa, claimed that naturalistic literature could not function properly as a reflection of life, so a new method had to be produced that would actively study society (Shea 23-4).

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, proletarian literature attracted international attention (Murayama 192). A suitable working explanation of proletarian literature is found in *Leftwing Literature in Japan*:

[s]ince the actual people with whom the popular arts combined had been obliged to live extremely poor and inhuman lives under a large measure of feudal suppression and capitalistic exploitation, these people themselves

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<sup>7</sup> "Naturalism for the Japanese was the logical extension of the impulse toward realism in fiction that had first been generated in 1885" (Keene 221).



became conscious of the popular arts as fighting arts, and here the origin of the literature of the worker class in Japan is found. (Shea 46)

Another socialist organization formed in 1920, *Nihon Shakaishugi Dōmei* (Japanese Socialist League) reinforced proletarian ideals. Membership was independent of social class. Members included writers from the working class as well as intellectuals. As opposed to the Society for the Study of Socialism, the Japanese Socialist League was a collective group of active socialists. Though not the first organization of its kind, they published an important magazine, *The Sower*, with a distribution of 200 copies (69-71). G. T. Shea credits this magazine, and those behind it, for being “the real initiator of the proletarian literary movement in Japan” (72). Russian communists influenced the Japanese movement even further in 1924, when the participants of the Fifth General Meeting of the Comintern in Moscow sent out an “international appeal... to proletarian writers of the world” (136).

However, the proletarians, like other Japanese factions, were not completely in opposition with the State. Donald Keene makes an important observation. During World War One (1914-1918):

[i]t proved to be not impossible for the proletarian critics to find common ground with the militarists. Such slogans as ‘Asia for the Asians’ could be subscribed to by both, though with different overtones, and the study of folk literature similarly could be made to serve as evidence of the glory of the Japanese race, in the right-wing manner. (Keene 580)

So, we can see that we cannot simply separate the proletarian writers' views from those of general society. These writers did not dismiss popular values completely, only modified them to some extent while also expressing their own ideals.

Because of an increase in literacy rates and technological advances in media in Japan in the 1920s, proletarian, as well as general, literature became more widespread. William Gardner suggests that at this time, "the 'modern novel' and 'modern poetry' were firmly established... modeled to a large degree on their Western counterparts..." (Gardner 20). Keene believes that "[p]erhaps the most significant change during the Taisho era was the greatly improved social status of the writer" (Keene 546). In fact, one writer, Masamune Hakuchō (1879-1962), claimed that the change in public recognition was a result of Japan's newfound wealth after World War I (547). Ogawa Mimei was one of the writers who benefited from the new perspective on writers in Japan.

#### Ogawa's Participation

Ogawa was a part of, and even initiated, several socialist and proletarian groups. *Leftwing Literature in Japan* provides a comprehensive list of his contributions to and participation in the proletarian literature movement. Ogawa was a member of *Kaihō* magazine in the 1910s (Shea 110). He also published a magazine titled *Kokuken* (Black Smoke), whose slogan was "anti-capitalism" (47). He led a group named *Seichōkai*, or the Blue Bird Society, in which members studied romanticism (86). In 1920, he joined

the Japan Socialist League (118). In 1922, Ogawa was published in the proletarian literature magazine, *Shinkō Bungaku* (Newly Risen Literature) (90). He helped to organize the *Nihon Puroretaria Bungei Remmei* (Japan Proletarian Literary Arts League), an anti-Marxist league, in 1925 (117). By 1926, the League had experienced a shift towards Marxism and changed its name to *Nihon Puroretaria Geijutsu Remmei*, or the Japan Proletarian Arts League. Ogawa left the organization the same year (132). He was published in *Sensō ni Taisuru Sensō* (The War Against War), which was produced by the *Nihon Sayoku Bungeika Sōrengō* (Confederation of Japanese Left-Wing Literary Artists) in 1928. *The War Against War* was the first anthology of anti-war literature to be published in Japan (176). Also in 1928, Ogawa helped to establish the *Shinkō Dōwa Sakka Remmei* (League of Writers of the Newly Risen Juvenile Stories), which circulated a magazine called *Dōwa Undō*, Juvenile Literature Movement (213). Ogawa's journey through these groups and publications effectively illustrates the link of the Children's Literature Movement to proletarian literature.

### The Proletarian Children's Literature Movement

One critic, Ino Shōzō, claims that proletarian children's literature really began in the 1920s. He writes:

[a]nti-militaristic works were too few... also, children's stories were characteristically educational, but still, the amount of preaching in them was too preponderant; and, further, the stories were published in adult magazines... with

little chance to reach their intended reader. Regardless of the source of publication, however, it seemed that in content matter alone, the proletarian children's story would be almost completely without appeal to any child. (Shōzō 213-4).

From Ino's comments, it appears that proletarian children's literature was not extremely popular. However, I question whether all proletarian children's literature was intended only for children. As I will show later through analyzing Ogawa's stories, it may be that the lessons in the stories were sometimes aimed at the entire family unit, and sometimes even adults, specifically.

Although proletarian influence on children's stories did not really begin until the first decades of the twentieth century, a focus on children's stories may have emerged earlier than that. Right before the turn of the century, Iwaya Sazanami (1869-1933) traveled to Europe and was captivated by the outbreak of children's literature, especially stories by Hans Christian Andersen. Upon his return to Japan, he decided to document and retell traditional Japanese stories for children, which were published between 1894 and 1896 (Mayer x). Iwaya's activity reflects the growing interest in childhood during the Meiji era.

#### Ogawa Focuses on Children's Stories

As well as playing an active role in the rise of proletarian literature, Ogawa also wrote original children's stories. A six-volume collection of his work, *Ogawa Mimei*

*Sunshū* (Selected Works of Ogawa Mimei), was published in 1925. After the volumes were published, he abandoned his previous practice of writing novels and essays and devoted himself to writing children's stories. According to Shea, he has "set a high artistic standard for this genre in Japan" (Shea 119). The publishing house, Maruzen, published *Mimei Dōwa-Shū*, the Collection of Ogawa Mimei's Children's Stories. Five volumes were published from 1927 to 1930 (119). According to the *Kodansha Encyclopedia of Japan*, Ogawa sought to "make children's literature more creative and artistically refined," and objected to Iwaya Sazanami's work on the grounds that it was too "didactic" (Kodansha 279). In the following sections, I will analyze Ogawa's stories by theme. I will also reference Andersen's stories in order to make connections between Western literature and Ogawa's works.

### **ANALYSIS OF OGAWA'S CHILDREN'S STORIES**

#### Westernization

Some of Ogawa's stories deal directly with the encroachment of the Western world in Japan before and at the time when he was writing. In this section, I will analyze several stories that act as Ogawa's commentary on westernization in Japan and relations between Japan and the West. These stories demonstrate the influx of Western culture and literature, such as Andersen's stories. By addressing the influence of Western culture on Japan, Ogawa instructs his readers on how to accept some aspects

of Western culture, while adapting those same concepts to sustain their own society and culture.

The premise of Ogawa's story, "The Wild Rose," is the friendship between a soldier from "a big, wide country" and a soldier from "a smaller one" (WR 184). Although Ogawa never states the names of these, which in the story are contiguous, we can assume that the smaller country is Japan, and the larger country represents a western country. These two soldiers guard either side of "a tall white boundary stone" (184) that lies between the countries. Because they see each other every day, the men begin to interact and develop a friendship. The men are shocked when they learn that a war has broken out between their two nations and "they [can] no longer be friends but must be divided" (186). The soldier from the great country, who is in reality a colonel, offers to let his younger friend kill him in order to advance his status. His friend refuses and replies, "How could you be my enemy? My enemy is not you: my foes ought to be other people... to fight for my country, I shall go up to the north" (186). Although they come from different countries that are now at war, the two men do not turn on each other. However, they recognize their duties to their respective nations. The older man receives news that the small country has lost the war and all of its soldiers have fallen, and thinks of his friend with sadness.

This story clearly displays antiwar sentiments. Because the younger soldier of the small country obeyed his military commanders, he was killed in battle. Ogawa also does not provide a reason for the outbreak of war. All we know is that "[f]or a long

time, no difficulties arose between the two; the people of those countries [enjoy] peace year after year” (WR 184) and that these two soldiers are capable of being friends. After the opening of the Japanese borders, there was an influx of Westerners who interacted with many Japanese people on a regular basis. The two soldiers differ by their place of origin, age, and military allegiance. If even a war cannot dismember the bond between these two soldiers, then Western and Japanese peoples are capable of living in harmony, and possibly friendship. If both sides maintain this harmony, then they are not enemies, and they have no reason to fight one another. Here, as in the following story, not all Westerners represent a threat to Japan.

In “The Traveler who Never Returned,” Ogawa introduces the setting as a small country house at the end of autumn. Then, “[o]ne day at sunset, the western sky [gives] an unnaturally yellow light, which often [is] the sign of a storm coming very soon” (TTNR 169). On a basic plot level, a storm is arriving from the West. So, what is the real meaning behind this storm? Later in the story, a traveler arrives, seeking shelter. We learn that he travels “all the year round, to various countries” and has “a medicine which works wonders,” (172) which he offers to the family to heal their sick daughter. We can associate the stranger with the storm, because, although Ogawa does not state it explicitly, the stranger has most likely traveled to the West. Even if he is Japanese, he still carries the West with him. He brings with him foreign medicine that the family does not trust immediately.

The family perceives him as a threat and does not let him in. But, once he gives them the medicine, the father feels “repentant, and [hesitates] a second or two as to whether he let him in, but ere he uttered a word, the traveler [quits] the place” (TTNR 172). After all else fails, the father decides to give the foreign pills to his daughter, who then recovers miraculously. Then, the father “[suffers] remorse, and firmly [resolves] that if the traveler would come round, he would do everything in his power to entertain him” (174). As he watches his daughter grow into womanhood, the father cannot stop thinking about “the traveler to whom he [owes] everything” (174). Even though the father resolves to welcome the stranger the next time he comes, no travelers stop by the house ever again.

We can interpret this story as a warning. Because the father did not receive the traveler with hospitality, the family misses their chance to possibly profit further from the stranger’s experience. The wonderful medicine is only a taste of what they might have possibly gotten had they admitted the traveler into their home. The traveler arrived in a threatening storm from the West, but storms can be good in nature. Although the father was rightfully cautious, he was too wary and bypasses his opportunity for beneficial contact with foreign products and information. So, complete rejection of Western ideas might do more harm than good.

Another of Ogawa’s stories, “The Western Sky is Glowing,” also addresses the fact that Japanese citizens were traveling to other countries. The protagonist, Osen, chooses to wed a man who is “a poor pedlar from a distant country” (TWSG 165).



Unlike the traveler in the previous story, this man is definitely foreign. Because of his background, Osen's aunt (her caretaker) does not approve of him. However, Osen is determined and decides to "cross the mountains and go to another country where the sunshine is always bright, and where [they] shall be together" (165-6). Osen's betrothed promises her that their destination is a wonderful place. Although we cannot equate his speech with Ogawa's, the author does write that the man "[relates] interesting and marvelous stories of what he [has] seen and heard" (165). By describing the man's stories in this way, Ogawa gives credit to the stories, which are presumably about his foreign adventures.

After Osen leaves her hometown, the villagers forget about her existence after a few years. The village carries on as normal. One day, Osen returns without warning after her husband falls sick. Although "[h]er appearance [has] changed... her way of speaking, and her black, liquid eyes [are] not altered at all" (TWSG 166). Once Osen is exposed to Western culture, she changes superficially. She still speaks and looks the same, aside from her clothing, which is really only an outer shell. Ogawa does not make it clear whether or not Osen has abandoned her Japanese heritage for Western ideals or not. One indication that she has not is when she hears singing from weavers "and recalling her former days, Osen [cannot] restrain her tears" (TWSG 167). Although she forces herself to continue selling her husband's wares in order to support her family in other locales, Osen does not let go of her roots.

As Osen travels onward, her aunt worries about the horrible weather that her niece is fighting through. Just as Osen is about to tackle the most difficult part of her journey, “the western sky [becomes] clear; the clouds [are]... unimaginably beautiful, as if they were the shell wares and silver hairpins, or silk goods unrolled above” (TWSG 168). The western sky becomes a parallel to the goods that Osen’s foreign husband once sold. The West becomes a place from where Japanese citizens can receive products. When Osen’s aunt sees that the sky is clear, she cries, ““Osen, Osen darling! The western sky is glowing!”” (168). The narrator claims that, even to the present day, village children repeat this phrase when the western sky glows (168). The aunt’s phrase and the fact that the western sky is full of light indicate hope. Her worries are put to rest because the light in the sky seems to promise that Osen will prosper from selling her wares. As a Japanese person who goes abroad and then returns to sell Western wares, Osen acts as a symbol for trade with the West. According to the omen in the sky, Osen will meet with success because of her contact with the West. Other stories, like “A Soup Bowl for a Feudal Lord,” also contain references to trade with foreign nations, as well as the presence of modern inventions such as steamships.

Though Ogawa does not reject Western influence, he also cautions against total westernization. In “A Flute Made by One’s Own Hands,” Takao, a villager, carves a flute out of a bamboo shoot. Takao learns to imitate birdsong on his flute, and “[g]radually he [manages] to produce rare and mysterious sounds” (FMOH 189). He creates his own melodies, making him a unique flute player. However, his fellow villagers do not

appreciate his music. An old man tells him, “‘however good you might be, you are a self-taught player” (190) and advises him to seek a professional teacher. So, Takao wanders away from the village.

Because Takao has no money, he decides to earn a living by begging while playing his flute. One fateful day, an older man approaches him and tells him, “I have often heard famous performers playing the flute, but no one has touched my heart so truly as you do... I will take you with me. Having gathered geniuses of arts, I will make a beautiful town” (FMOH 191). The old man is actually a king traveling in disguise, and Takao accepts some money to sustain him until the king returns. Although Takao is self-taught and crafted his flute himself, a king considers him to be a musical genius. Because the king is an authority figure and has devoted his life to finding “geniuses of arts,” we can trust his opinion.

When a stranger approaches Takao, the “short man with a knowing look” (FMOH 192) tells him of a town further west where a master flute player resides. We find out that this man has “traveled from country to country” and has been exposed to “many schools of flutes” (192). He is familiar with the established art of playing the flute in various, no doubt Western, countries. Taken in by the man’s words, Takao begins to doubt his abilities as a flute player and the king’s abilities to discern superior flute music. When he hears the famous player’s music, he “[cannot] but remember the monotonous tune his flute [plays]” (193). Takao is so impressed by the other player’s music that his own seems modest and boring in comparison. After some deliberation, he goes so far

as to buy a new instrument, casting aside “his own flute, now dirty with handling, which [has] come on the journey with him all the way from his home” (193-4). By describing the flute in this way, Ogawa casts over it a nostalgic light. We experience regret that Takao chooses to abandon his homemade flute upon which he first learned his craft.

Takao devotes his time to playing his new flute. Right as he “[begins] to feel that a change [has] come into the tune,” (FMOH 194) the short man returns. He laughs and says, “At last you are making your flute worthwhile listening to” (194), then takes his leave. Unfortunately for Takao, the man’s advice does not serve him well. The king finally returns and Takao plays him a new melody. The king reacts: ““Are you the man I met?”” (194). Takao assures him that indeed he is, and the king demands that Takao play the same melody as before. Takao attempts to play it, “but the melody in the western town... still [rings] in his ears, while the fields, bamboos and the trees bending to the wind, all of which he used to see whenever he played his old flute, [come] no longer floating to his eyes” (194-5). Because Takao adopted the melody of the famous flute player, he cannot conjure up his original, unique tune.

This story is warning against total assimilation. The “western town” can be considered as a stand-in for the West. The flute player in the western town is well-known and the town carries beautiful instruments. However, the skill of the famous player and the apparent quality of Takao’s new flute does not create superior music, at least in the eyes of the king. The king himself may be a symbol of Japanese tradition. The king is disappointed in Takao’s second performance and “[t]ears wet his withered

cheeks" (FMOH 195). In the king's view, and it seems to be the narrator's opinion as well, Takao makes the wrong decision by adopting completely the foreign method of flute playing.

As we may gather from his other stories, Ogawa does not oppose Western influence, but advises against the complete westernization of Japan. When regarded as a whole, his stories reflect the complicated relationship between the West and Japan. As an intellectual, Ogawa attempts to demonstrate the extent to which he believes Japanese culture should be influenced by Western culture. He recognizes both the benefits and negative aspects of interacting with the West. As I show in the sections below, Ogawa's stories do not only address the influence of Western culture, but share elements with Andersen's stories. In the following section, I discuss how Ogawa and Andersen treat the issue of class conflict.

### Class Conflict

One of the social issues that Ogawa targets in his stories is class conflict. Although the feudal system was abolished at the beginning of the Meiji period, some of Ogawa's characters are feudal lords. He also juxtaposes poor and wealthy characters within the same stories in order to demonstrate the differences in their lives. Ogawa often applies a socialist lens to his stories. He stresses equality, not hierarchy, and refutes distinctions based on wealth and class. Andersen, on the other hand, offers his

readers a world with distinct social classes and encourages upward social mobility without restructuring the class system.

In “Rice with Red Beans,” the main protagonist is a wealthy girl who is an accomplished koto<sup>8</sup> player. She even has the luxury of a private music teacher, and her parents, who are “very rich and proud of their daughter, [are] so happy that they [will] willingly grant her every wish” (RRB 240). Because of their financial situation, the parents are able to indulge their daughter and encourage her creativity, as was recommended by authorities beginning in the Meiji era. They throw her parties during which she invites girls from her surrounding area to listen to her play the koto. Most of these girls do not come from wealthy families, and “might feel ill at ease in sitting straight on a cushion; they might prefer romping on the road or bouncing about in an open field” (241). For the children, the koto music breaks down the social barrier. However, their parents tell them that “her koto is a very high-priced article, and that is why it sounds good” (241). The adults understand that the girl’s privilege, not just her talent, is the reason why she can produce wonderful music.

One of the guests, a poor girl named Ohana, is enchanted by the koto’s sound. Although she pines after the expensive instrument, “[a]t school Ohana [is] a good, gentle, and obedient girl, and at home she [helps] her mother, and whatever things the mother [bids] her do, she never [refuses]” (241). Ogawa establishes Ohana’s good character so that we will empathize with her. She is so affected by the koto that she

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<sup>8</sup> A Japanese stringed instrument. (Morita 247)

sometimes puts aside her work and daydreams instead. When her mother catches her and finds out what Ohana is thinking about, “[f]or a moment, the mother’s face [shows] pity, but at the next instant, it [changes] into displeasure” (242). She accuses her daughter of reaching above her status, scolding, “Do you dream to do the same as she does? If the neighbors ever catch you, they will call you stupid!” (242). The wealthy can afford certain items and therefore can gain skills that poor people cannot. Ohana’s mother represents the people who associate wealth and skill and who think that wealthy is a synonym of superiority. She acts as the main obstacle against Ohana getting a koto, but Ohana cannot let go of her hopes.

Finally, Ohana’s father gets her a toy koto. Ohana learns to play from the birds outside her house and soon asks her mother to throw her a party like the rich girl has. In response, her mother calls her an “idiot” and a “stupid girl” (RRB 244). Punished and rejected, Ohana becomes “very sad at the thought that her koto could not move even her own mother’s heart” (245). In fact, “no one in the village [praises] her koto or [talks] of it” (245). Ohana lives in a world where tight social restrictions prevent any type of upward mobility and where only rich people have the right to luxuries. In this story, Ohana’s mother represents social limits. Her attitude appears to be supported by the rest of the villagers. Ohana’s father, however, represents another viewpoint. He buys the most expensive instrument he can afford and thus enables Ohana to gain the skills she was once denied. While at the same time representing a socialist view of Ohana’s dilemma, the father also demonstrates superior parenting skills, according to the Meiji

development of the concept of childhood. He bypasses social restrictions in order to foster Ohana's creativity.

Another of Ogawa's stories that focuses on skill being associated with class is "A Soup Bowl for a Feudal Lord." Unexpectedly, the conflict does not lie between the feudal lord and a peasant, but between a peasant and an artisan. There is a Japanese ceramist who is famous for his work and many people visit his town to admire and buy his goods. His products are even shipped overseas (SBFL 32). When a vassal of the provincial lord sees the ceramic work, he commissions a soup bowl for his master. The potter impresses the officer with the bowl and claims that "[i]t is beyond [his] power to make it still lighter or thinner" (33). The officer admires the bowl, and they leave together to present it to the lord. The potter puts on his best clothes and brings the bowl "to the palace, where it [is] reverently offered to the lord through the officer" (34). This practice is indicative of social restrictions. The potter cannot offer directly his handiwork to the lord. Instead, the bowl travels upward in class by way of the officer. But, this moment is more of an aside than central conflict.

Because the bowl is so thin, the feudal lord burns his hands whenever he lifts the bowl of hot soup. He wonders if his vassal is teaching him to be patient (SBFL 34). When he stops at a peasant's house during his travels, the feudal lord is pleased to enjoy his hot food in a thick bowl. He thinks to himself, "Should it not be annoying and absurd to value and use a fragile [bowl]?" (35). When asked from where the bowl originates, the peasant replies that he does not really know. It must "have been made



by a nameless man, who little imagined that his work would be so honored” (36). The lord honors his skill in creating a bowl that functions exactly how it is supposed to. When he sees the famous potter again, he scolds him for not being considerate of others with his creations. The story ends with the note, “The awed and humiliated man [withdraws] feeling very small... he [changes] his ways, and [becomes] a common workman” (36). Because the ceramist was caught up in the beauty and supposedly fine qualities of his work, he completely misses the point of a bowl, which is to hold hot food.

In this story, Ogawa raises the commoner over the famous artisan. Because the potter is famous, other people overlook the deficiencies of his bowls, thinking that they must appreciate them. On the other hand, the nameless potter feels that he cannot hope to gain any recognition for his bowl. He does not have fame or money, which are associated with skill. However, Ogawa shows that any man can create a praiseworthy product. Even the famous potter turns to a lower class lifestyle because he realizes that his pottery is not in fact superior just because it is finely crafted. Ogawa stresses the practicality of the bowl, demonstrating how the lower class has not been corrupted by wealth or fame, and thus can maintain the true function of the bowl. He defines skill by functionality. Class, fame, and money do not determine skill.

Other stories in which Ogawa mentions the disparities between classes in a socialist manner include “To the Stars,” and “A Girl of the North,” and “A Doll Stolen.” Tatsukichi in “To the Stars” is “obliged to go to a far distant village to work as a servant”

when he is twelve (TS 205). His guardian, his grandmother, does not have sufficient means to support Tatsukichi, so he must work and is unable to attend school.

The story, "A Girl of the North" demonstrates the dichotomy of rural villages and cities in Japan. Ken, who has been living in a "small fishing village," (GN 84) must return to Tokyo, "where the traffic [is] heavy and where in spite of the heat, like so many ants, human beings [walk]" (85). One of his village friends, a girl, cries at the thought of his departure. He asks her to exchange letters, but she becomes embarrassed and admits that she cannot read. When he finds out that she never attended school, he "[feels] very sorry that his desire to write to her [has] been brought to naught, but even if she [is] ignorant, why should it be a reason to disparage her?" (86). She has never even been to Tokyo. Years later, the images of the fishing village start to fade from Ken's mind. One day, a "country girl, poorly dressed in short clothes" shows up at their door. Ken's younger brother tells her, "'No, no, we want nothing from you!'" (87) and attempts to make her leave. After hearing about the incident, their mother "[warns] them that they should always close the entrance carefully" (88). Ken realizes suddenly that the country girl is really his old playmate. But she is already gone, so he will never see her again.

Ken is an example of positive interaction between city-dwellers and rural peasants. He lives in the village for some time and learns to appreciate it and makes friends with the village children. He recognizes that ignorance due to lack of money for schooling is not a reason to mock or think less of someone. In the end, however, he

forgets what he learned in the village and severs the connection with his old friend. His mother and brother represent people who are not sympathetic to the poor and refuse to help them. The entrance to their home may be interpreted as the barrier between wealthier people and poor villagers.

The main character in "A Doll Stolen," Miyo, gains sympathy for a poor child. While she is playing with her doll, a "miserable-looking beggar girl of around seven or eight" (Akiyama 6) observes her. The poor girl asks herself, "Why wasn't I born to a family like hers? When can I ever hold in my hands such a lovely doll and toys?" (6-7). Through no fault of her own, the beggar girl will never be able to enjoy the comforts and luxuries that are part of normal life for Miyo. Upon seeing the little girl, Miyo thinks, "How cold she must be in those dirty, thin clothes in this cold weather. And she is but a little kid" (7). Miyo understands the plight of the beggar girl, but her own morals are not put to the test until the beggar girl steals her doll. Miyo "[cannot] forget her [stolen] doll, and she [cannot] help resenting what the beggar girl [has] done" (8). When she finally falls asleep, Miyo dreams of the little girl and feels pity. Conflicted, she turns to her teacher the next day at school. After talking through the situation with her teacher, Miyo decides that she should let go of any resentment she feels toward the beggar girl. Her teacher rewards her, "You are a good girl with a warm heart. You are right. Do you please forgive her...' [and...] [caresses] her head" (9). Although Miyo has a good heart to begin with, the trial of having her doll stolen brings out her best moral character. Perhaps the beggar girl should not have stolen the doll, but, due to her

circumstances, the teacher leads Miyo to the conclusion that she should be forgiven. In this way, Miyo resolves the conflict that results from class differences.

One of Andersen's stories presents a different method of overcoming class differences. Rather than encouraging a positive view of peasants, Andersen promotes social climbing in "The Little Mermaid." The little mermaid's desire to join the human world is a reflection of Andersen's own journey from poverty to higher social circles. The little mermaid is of noble birth, yet is not permitted to swim to the surface of the ocean in order to gaze at the human world until she is fifteen. She is frustrated because "[t]he very fact that she [can't] go there [makes] her yearn for it all the more" (LM 69). Because Andersen's father taught him that their family was of noble descent, the little mermaid's situation appears to be even more similar to Andersen's life.

Andersen establishes the human world as superior to the undersea world. He physically sets the human world "up above" those who live on the "sea floor" (LM 68). The main reason why the little mermaid longs to be a part of the human world is because humans have immortal souls, so continue to Heaven after their death (76). In order to gain access to the human world, the little mermaid relinquishes her voice, her best feature, to the sea witch (79). She also exchanges her tail for human legs, despite the fact that "every step [she takes] will feel like [she is] treading on a sharp knife and [will] make [her] blood flow" (79). Once on land, she interacts with the royal family and attempts to marry the prince, who is a symbol of the highest social class that she could achieve on Earth. The little mermaid suffers continuously until she finally reaches a

level between Earth and Heaven. She now has a chance to gain an immortal soul and have access to Heaven, which is above all other “classes” (86-7). The class hierarchy in this story, from bottom to top, goes from mermaids, to humans, to sylphs, and finally to the souls in Heaven. Although this story has a religious message, we cannot ignore the social context. Andersen advocates upward social mobility as a way in which to gain happiness. Although the little mermaid suffers, and eventually dies, she is rewarded for her persistence by reaching the next level in her quest for an immortal soul. Andersen leaves his readers with the promise that, eventually, the little mermaid will gain an immortal soul and have access to Heaven.

Ogawa’s story, “A Sinister Red Candle Fire” (also translated as “The Red Mermaid and the Red Candles”), might be a direct response to Andersen’s text but reveals a different message. Ogawa’s tale begins in exactly the same vein as “The Little Mermaid.” The mermaid asks herself, “our figure and our heart take after those of human beings. Why do we have to live with the fishes in such dark, gloomy, cold water?” (SRCF 9). Like Andersen’s mermaid, she feels as though she belongs on land. She “[yearns] after the world where everything [is] full of light” (9). Just as the little mermaid admires human beings, so does Ogawa’s mermaid. She believes that humans are kind and have beautiful cities (11). When she gets pregnant, the mother mermaid wishes for her daughter to be brought up on land. Although I believe that this story is Ogawa’s version of Andersen’s tale, I do not think that it sends the same message as does Andersen’s. Ogawa’s insistence on the similarities between the mermaid’s body

and a human's body indicates equality between mermaids and humans. Unlike Andersen, Ogawa does not force his mermaid child to change her physical appearance. The mermaid child is adopted by a couple who makes and sells candles, rather than a prince. Andersen's mermaid constantly reaches for the highest class possible, first in the human world, then Heaven, which is the highest point in the hierarchy of Heaven and Earth. Although Ogawa's mermaid mother does change her daughter's social situation, she views the shift through a socialist lens. Because she does not change anything about her daughter, we can interpret that she sends her daughter to the human world to be equal, not necessarily to leave the lower class.

Through his stories, Ogawa promotes social mobility based on a preexisting equality, rather than changing oneself to fit the societal image of an upper class. He also points out that some people who belong to upper classes have skewed vision. Like the famous potter in "A Soup Bowl for a Feudal Lord," they have been corrupted by power and wealth. As a solution, Ogawa offers the concept of equality and promotes the lower class. Andersen, on the other hand, does not dispute the class system. Instead, he maintains the hierarchy and encourages upward social mobility through self-change and sacrifice. He promises reward for those who do so. In the following section, I will examine how Ogawa and Andersen view the importance of nature and the impact of civilization.

Nature and Civilization

Nature is an important subject in Ogawa's stories. Sometimes, nature is the backdrop of the story, other times, it is the subject. In Morita Michiko's dedication in her book of translations, she writes, "I hope that in reading each of his stories, the reader will appreciate Mr. Ogawa's warm, sensitive heart, and his love for all of nature's beauty. Even when concentrated on writing, his stories always [reveal] nature in her intrinsic beauty" (Morita 3). Nature, in the form of plants, elements, animals, and the like are sometimes the characters of Ogawa's stories. At times, they are even the protagonists. Some examples of nature in the form of characters are "The Tale of a Cloud and a Tree on a Mountain," "A Kaki Tree," "The Butterfly and the Rose," and "A White Bear." Andersen uses the same tactic in such stories as "The Fir Tree." On the subject of animal stories, Keith Barker claims, "The predominance of animals in children's books comes as no surprise when looking at the way Western civilizations treat... children and animals. Countries in other parts of the world take a far less sentimental attitude towards both groups..." (Barker 282). As I show below, Ogawa's nature-centered stories contradict Barker's point. Both authors display sentimentality toward a state of nature that is unsoiled by civilization.

Some of Ogawa's stories address how civilization can corrupt nature. In "Isle of Man's Dreams," three travelers—a singer, a jeweler, and a juggler—meet an optician by chance. He invites them to come live with him on an island. The man who owns the island feels lonely and desires company (IMD 211-12). The men agree and travel to the

island, where they find that “summer never [seems] to end, and very beautiful flowers [come] into bloom one after another” (IMD 213). The islander encourages them to bring seeds to plant around the island, so that it will become even more of a paradise. He claims that “[t]he soil is so rich and fertile that any plant can grow [there]” (213). Ogawa describes this scene as a utopia, with an abundance of natural beauty. Though the travelers love their new home, they cannot abandon their habits, and leave temporarily.

Once they depart, the islander receives another guest. A millionaire arrives on a “great steamer,” (IMD 215) one of the symbols of the progress of engineering. He convinces the islander, who is lonely in the absence of his friends, that if he advertises enough, then the island will “attract the fairest of the fair... But in order to realize the plan, these shabby cabins offensive to the eye, will have to be pulled down” (215). He insists further that “[t]his island will prosper with sightseers and tourists, and when they form a town, electric lights will be on, and you will profit by many other gifts of civilization” (215). Seduced by promise of brilliant company, the islander evicts his friends from the island. His luck turns when he is “cast out of his land” (216) by the newcomers. The advent of civilization on the island ruins the utopia that the islander and his friends created initially. What was once a tropical paradise is now a tourist spot teeming with people and modern conveniences like electricity.

An example of the human corruption of nature is Ogawa’s tale, “A White Bear.” Humans capture a polar bear and confine him in a zoo. The narrator describes how “[i]n



a land of freedom, he had acted just as he pleased” (WB 217). He attempts to break out of the cage, but his efforts are in vain. A young schoolboy addresses the polar bear, ““Why were you captured by human beings and brought here?”” (219), leaving us, the readers, asking the same question. The narrator claims that “[s]urroundings may influence and even change one’s nature” (220). Spectators feed the bear chocolate, which soften his fangs so that he is no longer the wild bear that he was when captured.

The bear changes even further. When a showman buys him from the zoo, he “[pares] his sharp nails and [pulls] out his fangs which still remained” (WB 221). The bear ignores the pain because he rejoices in his newfound freedom. However, it is not the kind of freedom that his former self would have wanted. In fact, he “no longer [dreams] of the north where he was born” (221). The bear learns how to dance on his hind legs and performs for crowds. The showman takes advantage of the spectators’ wonder and pity and exclaims, ““He deserves our pity having been separated from his home and brought to a faraway land. But he says he is happy being loved by you all!... I thought I would let him return to his home, but the bear whispered that he would rather not go...”” (223). We know that, of course, the showman never intends to send the bear back to his home and that the bear does not confide in him. There may be some truth in the bear’s preference of location. Ogawa makes it clear that his enjoyment of his surroundings is a result of being separated from his home for so long and having part of his identity literally stripped away from him. The showman requests

that the audience pity the bear, but the humans ignore the fact that they caused his situation.

One of Andersen's tales also places nature in a dichotomy with civilization. "The Fir Tree" can be interpreted as a warning against the effects of civilization on nature. The main character, a young fir tree, does not enjoy his surroundings: "The tree [takes] no pleasure in the sunshine, in the birds, or in the crimson clouds" (FT 164). The surrounding elements attempt to convince him of the glory of his home, but he does not believe them. He only desires to grow enough so that woodcutters will take him away to become a Christmas tree. Finally, his time comes, and when he is chopped down, the fir "[feels] a pain, a weakness, it [can't] even think about happiness" (165). Once he reaches a home, he becomes disillusioned from the vision he had of Christmas. When the tree is dragged to the attic, he maintains some optimism and believes that the humans are storing him there until they can plant him in the spring. Finally, a man removes him from the attic and he thinks, "'Now I'm going to live!'" (171). However, he is chopped up for firewood and burned. The tree laments, "'If only I had enjoyed it while I could'" (170). Although the fir tree was promised a wonderful vision of life after being cut down, he only experiences pain and suffering. The humans take advantage of all of the benefits of the fir that they can, finally using him to build a fire. The fir experiences no advantages in his experience with humans and realizes that he should have appreciated his home, nature, while he still had the chance.

Both authors validate the idea that civilization can corrupt nature. By utilizing nature as various characters, they bring the reader closer to nature through cultivating empathy for the characters. They treat nature as an ideal, a paradise that can be destroyed by human influence. The stories raise doubts in their readers because they show the original state of nature and then demonstrate how civilization can ruin that original state. In the following section, I will discuss the role of religion in the tales of Ogawa and Andersen.

### Religion

Religion makes an appearance in many of Ogawa's stories, most commonly as the religious beliefs of his characters or the presence of temples. In his stories we encounter Shintō and Buddhist shrines, Confucian morals, and Christian symbolism. There is also an emphasis on how Fate changes the characters' lives. He seems to utilize religion as a supporting element in his stories, unlike Andersen, who uses heavy religious intonations to relate Christian ideals to his readers. Although Ogawa is not as heavy-handed with regards to religion as is Andersen, some of his stories intertwine with religion, sometimes even Christianity.

Often, Ogawa's characters credit misfortune to Fate or God. It seems that these two ideas are interchangeable in Ogawa's stories because he does not favor one in particular. For example, in "Selfishness," the parents, who lose their baby, question God. Ogawa writes, "Is there no God in this world?" they cried bitter against

Providence" (S 61). Ogawa also establishes that the baby dies, despite it being "sinless" (60). Although the couple seems to believe in God, the narrator explains, "[y]et in this transitory world even very beautiful, innocent creatures cannot always be very happy: sometimes, they too, become the sport of fortune, for such is the way of the world" (60). The characters blame God for their troubles, yet the narrator also supports the idea that fate is responsible. The couple does not seem to prefer Christianity over other religious beliefs. They consult a fortune-teller, who seems to be a religious figure because he describes the baby's death in Christian terms. He also claims that, "'through [their] faith,'" the couple was finally "'blessed with a child'" (62). But, in the Western, Christian world, this fortune-teller might be considered to be a witch. The parents also pray to God and the wife visits shrines, which are most likely not Christian buildings (63).

Although the story does not favor one religion, the narrator's attitude toward the baby's death resembles one of Andersen's common themes: physical punishment in exchange for absolution. The fortune-teller says to the parents, "'...your baby's coming into this world was premature, that is, the baby was too pure and innocent to stay in this stained world... although his stay on earth was very short, the baby had to endure some mortification before returning to his home'" (62). He then advises the parents to pray to God so that their child might be reborn. The soothsayer's words recall the outcome of Andersen's tale, "The Red Shoes." Because Karen, the main character, succumbs to vanity, she endures physical punishment at the hands of God. God curses her red shoes so that they cleave to her feet and force her to dance without ceasing.

Her only respite is to ask an executioner to “chop off [her] feet with the red shoes” (RS 210). After she repents, Karen’s heart is “so filled with sunlight, with peace and joy, that it burst[s]. Her soul [flies] on the sunlight to God” (211). God removes Karen from the physical world because she achieves purity after suffering for her sins. Unlike Karen, the baby in Ogawa’s story does not commit any sins, but must still experience death in order to be joined with God. But like Karen, the baby is pure, which is the very reason why God takes him away from the physical world.

In several of Ogawa’s stories, there are some Christian motifs that are not deeply religious, but rather brief images of the Christmas holiday and its signifiers. In “A Drunken Star,” the main character, Sakichi, passes a church on Christmas Eve. Although he is not a member of the church, he “heard that any one [is] allowed to enter the Church at any time,” (ADS 176) so he looks inside. Sakichi sees “[a]n evergreen” and “from its branches [hang] many shining gold and silver ornaments, various kinds of red and purple colored toys, and pretty fruits” (177). Also present in the church is “an old man with a big bag on his shoulder,” and Sakichi realizes that “this old man [has] come from a distant land in order to please the children with the treasures he [carries]” (177). Quite obviously, Ogawa paints a picture of Santa Claus handing out toys to children on Christmas Eve. Although the tree and the Santa figure are not main elements of the story, they are introductory elements and set up the narrative. The image of the Christmas tree appears in some of Andersen’s stories, as well.

Even though Andersen's "The Little Match Girl" takes place on New Year's Eve, the little girl has a vision of a Christmas tree with "[a] thousand candles" that float up to the sky and become stars (LMG 248). Like in "The Drunken Star," this Christmas tree is not a central piece of the story. However, it does play an important transitory role as the medium through which the little girl's visions seem to fuse with reality. As described above, "The Fir Tree" centers around a fir tree who becomes a Christmas tree. The sparrows tell the tree that "[the chopped down trees] end up in the greatest splendor and glory you could ever imagine... decorated with the loveliest things: gilded apples, gingerbread, toys, and hundreds of candles!" (164-5). Ogawa's description of a Christmas tree is quite similar to those of Andersen's. Although Ogawa probably did not lift the description directly from Andersen's stories, he certainly borrowed the Western image of the Christmas tree.

In Ogawa's "Foolish Boy: Wise Man," there is a basket of toys, which include a "celluloid figure of an old man resembling Santa Claus" (ADS 139). Could this Santa-figure be a real toy that was present in the Japanese market? In her book, *Christmas Around the World*, Maria Hubert describes the introduction of Christmas and Santa Claus to Japan. According to Okawa Mariko, the image of Santa Claus became known in Japan in 1875. *Santakuro*, the first Japanese children's book about Christmas and Santa Claus, was published in 1898, which is near the end of the Meiji period and several decades before Ogawa began to write children's stories. Japan made and exported Christmas goods to Western countries during the Taisho period. Some of the Santa

Claus figurines were made out of celluloid. During the Taisho period and especially World War I, Christmas goods became easily available in Japan (Hubert).

Through Ogawa's eyes, we can see how the Western Christmas tradition was fused into Japanese culture. Christmas is celebrated in Japan in various ways even today. Although Christmas is a Christian holiday, Ogawa integrates Christmas signifiers into his stories without making them "Christmas stories." His adoption of these symbols reflects the practice of adapting Western culture to Japanese norms.

Although Ogawa utilizes motifs of Christianity in his stories, he also features Japanese religious traditions, such as the practice of visiting shrines. One story in which the shrine plays an important part is "A Sinister Red Candle Fire." A mermaid leaves her child on land, hoping that humans will adopt her. A chandler's wife decides to visit a shrine where people offer candles. She tells her husband, "the fact that we live in comfort is entirely dependent upon the god of the shrine on the hill. I think our candles would not sell so well if it were not for the shrine. We must thank the god" (SRCF 12). Her husband agrees, and she goes to the shrine. As she leaves, she discovers the mermaid's baby. She decides, "Providence may be in this. I might be punished if I pass without picking it up. The god may have given me this baby, because he knows that we have no child" (13). The god of the shrine is implicated fully in their lives. The woman believes that the appearance of the baby has a direct correlation to her praying at the shrine. Again, her husband agrees with her and they believe that the child is a "blessing" (14). When she grows older, the young mermaid paints her foster father's

candles and they become increasingly popular. A rumor about the candles spreads: “People [say] that whoever [offers] a pictured candle at the shrine on the hill, and [sails] out to sea with the candle ends, should never be shipwrecked or drowned” because the shrine is “dedicated to the god of the sea” (15). Whereas the god may not have been the cause of the mermaid child’s appearance, it certainly seems as though the god has enough power to control the seas and to prevent faithful townspeople from drowning. After the couple end up betraying their adopted daughter by selling her for a profit, the mermaid mother becomes angry. She paints a candle entirely red and places it in the shrine. It seems that the candle is cursed, because “whoever only [sees] a red flickering fire should be drowned in the sea” (21). The shrine becomes a negative symbol for sailors and the townspeople.

In “A Sinister Red Candle Fire,” religion is prominent. Ogawa keeps returning to the shrine at key points in the story. The couple attributes their financial fortune and then the luck of finding a child to the god in the shrine. Then, the young mermaid’s candles please the god to the point where he protects sailors who carry candle ends after having prayed at his shrine. Finally, the mermaid’s real mother incites the god into anger over the human couple’s betrayal of her daughter. These stories exemplify how religious rituals have an impact on the entire community.

Often, Ogawa demonstrates religion in his stories through moral lessons that derive from religious tenets. Two examples of this practice are the stories, “Greed” and “Selfishness.” The titles state explicitly the lesson that the reader is about to receive.



The main character in "Greed" is not established as a suitable role model. In the first scene of the story, he is "lying on the floor instead of working in his field... indulging himself in various idle fancies (G 47). He believes that, try as though he might, he will never get rich based solely on physical labor. As he contemplates his life, he discovers a Buddha statue, which he hopes he can sell for a fortune (47). Two millionaires are interested in his statue and he attempts to double his profit by buying a second Buddha. Both millionaires spot the deception and the man finishes with nothing (56-9). The man is also proud, because he cannot "get up his courage to work in the fields again" (59) after his reputation as a rich man spread.

Another moral wrong, selfishness, is embodied in Ogawa's story with the same name, "Selfishness." When a dream figure promises the mother that her dead baby will be returned to her, she ventures out to reclaim her child. She happens upon a young mother who is in the process of abandoning her child because she "cannot provide for her baby any longer" (S 66). Her reasons for abandoning the child are not entirely selfish, but the main character's reaction is. Wondering if this child could be her reborn baby, she approaches the other woman only to find that it looks nothing like her baby. She declares, "[till] I find my own, I cannot raise a stranger's baby" (68). When she changes her mind and wants to examine the baby for a second time for any resemblance to her own, the other woman is already gone. Ogawa ends the story with finality: "And from that day on, the husband and wife were never blessed with another child, but passed their days leading a forlorn, dreary life" (69). Through her selfishness,

the wife bars herself from the possibility of having another child. Ogawa hints that the child might in fact have been her reincarnated baby. At first, “the baby’s face [is] faintly seen” (68), so there is still a chance that this is really her baby. Because she cannot overcome her own problems to help someone and save another baby’s life, she and her husband are punished by never having another child.

“Greed” and “Selfishness” are examples of two of Ogawa’s methods for delivering a moral to his readers. In Greed, religion is present in the form of the coveted Buddha and the stance against greediness. The main character, once having a taste of the promise of wealth, continues in a downward spiral, driven by greed. We are unaware of the main character’s religious beliefs. In this story, religious rituals are not present and are not utilized to demonstrate the point. On the other hand, “Selfishness” is a story that is imbedded in religious ritual, such as prayer. The characters’ religious beliefs are highlighted, and the plot of the story centers around their faith. Another religious subject that Ogawa deals with in religious terms is the afterlife.

As I have already shown, the concept of the afterlife in the story, “Selfishness,” seems to be a Christian concept. However, it does not lack natural elements that are almost magical in quality. The fortune-teller describes, “[the] deceased child was turned into the figure of a little red flowering plant, and is blooming at the top of a high mountain where everything is covered with snow. But, before long, the baby will be taken into the starry world” (S 62). Because there is a heavy presence of Christianity in this story, we may assume that the starry world means Heaven. And as I mentioned

before, the ultimate destination of the baby's soul is Heaven, much like Karen's soul in Andersen's "The Red Shoes." In the same way that he added the shrines to the story, Ogawa resists making this a completely Christianity-based tale by including a supernatural, magical element in the process of the soul going to Heaven. Andersen also adds a magical element to the afterlife in his story, "The Little Mermaid." Because mermaids do not have immortal souls, she does not have immediate access to Heaven. Once she sacrifices her life to save the prince's, some form of the mermaid floats in the air among "hundreds of lovely, transparent creatures" (LM 86). She learns that these "daughters of the air have no eternal souls either, but through good deeds they can create one for themselves" (86).

Another of Ogawa's stories, "The Wine Shop Dog" follows essentially the same plot line as Andersen's "The Little Match Girl." The protagonist of Andersen's story is a poor girl. She is stuck outside on New Year's Eve because she did not sell enough matches and is afraid that "[h]er father [will] beat her, and it [is] cold at home too" (LMG 247). As she freezes to death in the cold, she lights the remaining matches for warmth. In her delirium, she experiences a series of visions. In her final vision, she sees her late grandmother and begs her to take her along (248-9). The grandmother answers her granddaughter's appeal by "[lifting] the little girl into her arms, and they [fly] in radiance and joy, so high... And there [is] no cold, no hunger, no fear. They [are] with God!" (249). Finally, the little match girl is able to escape her worldly torments. She is

no longer cold, nor hungry, nor afraid of her father. The little boy in “The Wine Shop Dog” suffers in a similar fashion, only to gain freedom at the end of the story.

Like the little match girl, the wine shop servant boy is not known by name, but in relation to his occupation. The townspeople call the orphan “the wine shop dog” (TWSD 132). He is also mistreated, although not physically. The only woman who acts kindly toward him is a musician who comes into the shop once. When he becomes stuck in a severe storm, the boy recalls his “master’s fierce withering glance and then [pictures]... the faces of the naughty children who always [jeer] at him” (134). Unlike the little match girl, the boy returns to his home, where his mistress reprimands him for getting his clothing wet from the rain (135). Although he does not receive any physical blows, he is wounded emotionally by almost everyone in town. Finally, he wishes that he could join his mother and father in Heaven. He then leaves his town through the agency of the lady musician: “Suddenly there [appears] before his eyes the beautiful visage of a woman...” who tells him, “justice and true happiness exist... From now on I shall be your mother, and make you very happy! If you understand, come with me!” (136). It seems as though the musician is a real person who the boy encountered previously, but she retains a mystical quality when she appears suddenly. She is similar to the little match girl’s grandmother in that she takes the child away to a better place: “Taken by his new mother, the dog of the wine shop [goes] to a faraway land” (136). On a basic level, the musician comes back, adopts the orphan, and they leave the town. But

this ending is not one-dimensional. Though Ogawa does not specify that they are going to Heaven, we can imagine that the faraway land represents some construct of Heaven.

Another one of Ogawa's descriptions of the afterlife that parallels Andersen's is that found within "To the Stars." The main character, Tatsukichi, is an orphan. When he asks his grandmother if his mother will return, his grandmother replies, "When we cease to live here, we shall all ascend to the sky and become twinkling stars. Your mother too, became a star, and from above watches you grow gentle and strong" (TS 204). In Andersen's "The Little Match Girl," the child recalls what her grandmother once told her, that "[w]hen a star falls, a soul rises up to God" and her grandmother then appears to her "so bright, so glittering," (LMG 248) just like a star. We may interpret her grandmother's words to mean a shooting star. In both stories, the image of a soul rising up to Heaven is associated with a star. Unlike the little match girl, Tatsukichi travels physically to Heaven, rather than only his soul. After climbing a tall tree that the children think touches the sky, only his clothes are left and "his figure [is] no where to be seen" (TS 210). Some people throw around theories that Tatsukichi somehow transformed himself into a bat or a bird, but the narrator lets us know that "no one [perceives] the truth" (210). If Tatsukichi's physical body is no longer on Earth, then does he die? I believe that this ending remains a version of a soul reaching the stars, even if the body does not technically die. Because of his attachment to his parents, Tatsukichi is able to transcend physical boundaries.

In his stories, Andersen treats the death of his characters as a medium through which they can reach God and Heaven. He does not dwell on the physical death of his characters, but focuses on the afterlife in Heaven. For example, in "The Little Match Girl," he devotes only a paragraph to her death and justifies it with the beauty of her soul's passage to Heaven. When the townspeople discover her body, they see that she died "with a smile on her lips" (LMG 249). The mermaid in "The Little Mermaid" "[throws] herself from the ship... and [feels] her body dissolve into foam... [The sun's] rays [fall] so gentle and warm on the deadly cold sea foam, but the little mermaid [does] not feel death" (86). More attention is paid to the fact that she now has a chance to gain an immortal soul. In "The Red Shoes," Karen finally achieves full repentance and "[h]er heart [is] so filled with sunlight, with peace and joy, that it [bursts]. Her soul [flies] on the sunlight to God..." (212). For all of these children, their reward is the afterlife. In order to reach Heaven, they must die physically. Andersen encourages his audience that transcending to the afterlife is far superior to living on Earth, no matter how young the child might be.

After examining Ogawa's works, it appears that he borrows Western religious concepts, such as the idea of the afterlife and images of Christmas. However, these motifs are not uniform in all of his stories that incorporate Western religious ideas. Rather than simply adopting Western religious and moral tenets, he adapts them so that they intertwine with Japanese traditions. Both authors utilize mostly children to depict

morals and values that derive from religious traditions. Below, I will discuss the importance of childhood in Ogawa's works.

### Children and Childhood

As I described in my brief historical background of Japan, Ogawa was writing at the time of the emergence the concept of childhood in Japan. The shift toward viewing children as being fundamentally different from adults began in the Meiji period and continued through the time when Ogawa wrote his children's stories. Although most school, government, and intellectual authorities were attempting to champion childhood, their influence was to some degree limited. Ogawa deals with the issue of childhood and the role of children in his stories by using children as main characters. Andersen also often casts children as the protagonists, but does not advocate childhood and indulgence of children as much as he reinforces social and religious restrictions on children's behavior.

One of Ogawa's stories that seems to target parents more than children is "Rice with Red Beans," discussed above. Later in the story, Ohana falls ill yet still clings to her koto. She never throws a party because she dies, and "[o]ver her death not only the father, but the mother who often scolded her, [lament] extremely" (246). Only when a music teacher, a luxury that the family could not afford, stops by do the parents realize that Ohana could play well. Once again, "the mother... [tastes] remorse" (246). In

penance, she cooks a traditional dish and places it around Ohana's tomb as a representation of the party that her parents never allowed her.

This story accurately represents the sentiments of those in support of the childhood movement. Ogawa warns parents who do not encourage their child to profit from his or her childhood. In order to do this, the child must not have to work all day. Attending school is not enough; the child should be able to play and have their wishes fulfilled to some degree. Indulgence of children is encouraged in order for them to blossom happily and creatively. A childhood left unnourished is lost forever, as is illustrated by Ohana's death.

Ogawa often uses poor children to illuminate the disadvantages that some children face. In "A Girl of the North," the poor girl who lives in the small fishing village is illiterate because she never went to school. Tatsukichi, in "To the Stars," must leave home and work at only twelve years of age. Impoverished families in his stories sometimes turn to child abandonment.

Child abandonment is prevalent in "A Sinister Red Candle Fire" and "Selfishness." Notably, Ogawa absolves the families who abandon their children in a way by providing them with pure motives. They all desire a better life for their children because they are poor and cannot provide well for their child. However, as Ogawa shows in "A Sinister Red Candle Fire," adoption is not always the best situation for these abandoned children. The old couple who adopts the mermaid child eventually betrays her and sells her for profit. Although she begs, "I shall work as hard as you will bid me. But please



do spare me from being taken to the southern land where I have no friend,” they are a “devilish pair, and [are] quite deaf to all her entreaties” (SRCF 18). The mermaid’s mother had learned that humans are the best of all creatures, yet she understands the truth once the couple betrays her daughter. She attempts to provide her daughter with a better life, but only places her in a trap.

As discussed above, the rich wife in “Selfishness” is appalled when she happens upon a poor woman who is in the process of abandoning her baby. She asks, ““What? Were you really thinking of forsaking your child in the snow?”” (S 66-8). Although she does not agree with the poor mother’s solution, the rich wife does not offer to help. Blinded by her sorrow for the loss of her own baby, she thinks, ““Why should I adopt a stranger’s child, which would cause me trouble?”” (68). She regards saving this child’s life by adopting it as “trouble,” rather than an opportunity to help the child and his mother. Although Ogawa does not agree with the practice of child abandonment, he also points a finger at those who are not willing to rectify the situation.

Ogawa’s story, “The Second Daughter,” is one instance when the adopted child encounters a positive situation. However, this is not a case of child abandonment. Rather, it reflects the custom of wealthy parents adopting children for various reasons, such as to pass on a family business or to marry one their own children. In the story, an old medicine vendor visits a town once a year and, one summer, asks a poor mother if he and his wife can adopt one of their daughters, as they have no children of their own. He promises, “We will bring her up as our own child, get her married, and would let the

couple carry on the trade” (Akiyama 66). The mother contemplates the situation, and decides that it would be “to the interest of the girl herself” (66) if the old man were to adopt her. Decision made, she sends her daughter to live with the old medicine vendor and his wife.

However, the mother and daughter are not completely satisfied with the new situation. Once she realizes that her “daughter could never be seen again... the mother [regrets] what she [has] done” (Akiyama 67). The younger brother also misses his sister, meaning that her departure affects the whole family, not just the mother. In a dream, the mother tells her daughter, ““Mother and children should live together even if they can only live a poor life”” (68). The daughter eventually writes a letter, describing how beautiful and comfortable her new home is and that “she [is] perfectly happy so they need have no worry” (68). Ogawa supports her statement by detailing how happy she really is with the old couple. Although she is happy, “[h]er yearning for home [is] continuous, and she always [thinks] how happy she would be if they could all still live together” (70). The mother and daughter both realize that the daughter is in a fortunate situation and is happy, but regret the decision that was made.

By eliminating the element of a horrible outcome for the adopted daughter, Ogawa supports his point, which the mother states explicitly. Parents and their children belong together, even if the parents are unable to financially support their children. In all of his stories that address child abandonment and adoption, Ogawa demonstrates that family members should not be separated from one another. Some of Ogawa’s

characters, like Tatsukichi, are orphans who miss their parents dearly. Tatsukichi is able to rejoin his parents in Heaven.

Andersen also uses orphans as his main characters. In "The Red Shoes," Karen is orphaned by her mother. "The Little Match Girl" is an especially poignant story, because although she is not an orphan, the little girl chooses to freeze rather than to return home, where her father will surely beat her. She finishes by freezing to death. In Andersen's stories, children, including orphans, must endure trials until they reach to Heaven. These trials include journeys and physical torment.

A major difference between Andersen and Ogawa is that Andersen puts his child characters through physical pain and suffering. He then justifies their suffering with religious ideology. For example, in "The Little Match Girl," the poor child freezes to death, which is a painful end. However, "[n]o one [knows] what beauty she had seen, or with what radiance she and her old grandmother had passed into the joy of the New Year" (LMG 249). In "The Little Mermaid," the mermaid suffers in order to gain an immortal soul. Karen of "The Red Shoes" suffers physically for committing the sin of vanity. She then voluntarily endures the pain of having her feet chopped off. Only after she overcomes the pain and repents inwardly is Karen whisked away to Heaven. Andersen forces his characters to suffer greatly, and often alone. However, he and Ogawa both depict role models for children in their stories.

Ogawa sometimes provides role models or guides for his child characters. In "A Doll Stolen," Miyo approaches her schoolteacher for moral guidance. They have an

exchange that explicitly reveals the lesson of the story. Step by step, they examine the situation and the teacher finally prompts Miyo, “Which do you think is better, to have her caught by the police or to forgive her?” (Akiyama 9). The lesson of the story is revealed explicitly through their dialogue, ensuring that Ogawa’s readers cannot misinterpret his message. The teacher plays an active role in Miyo’s thought process and moral development. The fact that a schoolteacher is Miyo’s moral instructor hearkens to the school system that was established in the Meiji era. Because parents were thought to be mostly unaware and incapable of instructing their children morally, the burden was placed on the shoulders of teachers. Moral guidance became an integral part of a child’s education.

One of Andersen’s role models that opposes Ogawa’s schoolteacher is the pastor in “The Red Shoes.” Karen approaches the pastor and requests that she might work and live there. The pastor reads to her and the other children from the Bible, and Karen absorbs the information. Unlike Miyo and her teacher, Karen and the pastor do not appear to interact much besides her listening to him read the Bible. She is quiet and “[sits] and [listens]” (RS 211) to him but does not confide in him. The pastor does not actively impact her inner reflection and Karen gains full repentance on her own.

Through their stories, Ogawa and Andersen reach out to children. Often, the morals and lessons of the stories are provided in explicit forms, allowing their child audiences to easily understand. Ogawa teaches morality and advocates childhood. Andersen also preaches good morals, but in a much more heavy-handed way and

utilizes religion to justify suffering. Ogawa, on the other hand, does not cause his child characters to suffer physically. Andersen is not particularly partial to childhood, because his child characters die and achieve ultimate happiness in Heaven, while their time spent on Earth is miserable. Ogawa champions the concept of childhood as it was developed in Japan throughout the Meiji period and beyond. Although they seem to have different ends, Ogawa and Andersen both use child characters and their situations as a means of instruction.

## CONCLUSION

As I have shown, Ogawa incorporates Western elements into his children's stories. Through analysis of thematic elements shared between Ogawa's and Andersen's stories, the presence of Western ideals in his stories is brought to light. However, in keeping with the social practice of his time<sup>9</sup>, he does not fully adopt Western ideals and exchange them for Japanese traditions. Instead he adapts Western ideals into his pieces to blend with Japanese society and culture. Although I cannot claim that Ogawa was influenced directly by Andersen, I do find evidence that supports that assumption: Ogawa was a child in the Japanese school system at the time when Andersen's stories were used in English textbooks; Andersen gained increasing popularity in Japan outside of the schools during Ogawa's lifetime; and it appears that Ogawa's "A Sinister Red Candle Fire" is a direct response to Andersen's "The Little Mermaid." Ogawa's stories result directly from the influence of westernization and the tension between Japanese modernization and Japanese traditional culture.

There are topics beyond the scope of this thesis that I do not address. First, I give only a brief overview of Japanese history and focus on relevant points, leaving space for more research on how specific elements of Western culture affected Japanese culture and society. This resulted in tensions between government, intellectual, and

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<sup>9</sup> Ogawa wrote most of his children's stories between 1915 and 1940. Although the attitude toward Western ideals shifted back and forth, the broad attempt to fuse aspects of Western society with indigenous ones remained the dominant paradigm throughout much of this period—at least until the mid-late 1930s, when ethnic nationalism became more pronounced.

religious authorities that can be fleshed out further. One subject that has potential is the rise and development proletarian children's literature movement and why and how it occurred at that particular time in Japanese history. For the purposes of thesis, I focus on Ogawa Mimei as a representative of the movement, but there are other writers who are involved. It would be possible to realize a lengthy comparison between Ogawa and another proletarian children's author, such as Suzuki Miekichi, or to examine common motifs within the works of several authors. In the same vein, one could examine the development of the concept of childhood in Japan.

Another possible direction is to compare Ogawa's stories with traditional Japanese narratives. I do not address the differences between Ogawa's stories and traditional stories because I focus on the effects of the tension between modernity and tradition on Ogawa's writing, not on the effect of tradition itself.

Further, one might focus on the issue of translation. Although my thesis is not centered around this topic, I do mention the complications of relying on translations. I rely on English translations of Ogawa's texts, which limits my knowledge. The Japanese public relies on Japanese translations of Western texts. Because of the practice of adaptive translation, the issue of translating culture itself arises. To what extent is Western culture preserved in Japanese translations? Also, to what extent do Japanese readers think that what they are reading is "Western?"

As I describe above, there are multiple ways to branch out from this thesis. The case study of Ogawa's stories in relation to Andersen's stories, the West, and a mix of

the modern and traditional in Japan provides a basis from which scholars can examine more thoroughly a number of topics that it addresses. Ogawa's stories represent a crucial time in the development of the concept of childhood and a shift in how children were viewed in Japan before and at the time that he was writing. Because there are so many other factors that play a role in this development, there are a myriad of facets that should also be examined. It is also important to remember that Ogawa and his colleagues are not the end result of the rise of the concept of childhood, which leads to the question of the condition and purpose of both traditional and new children's literature currently in Japan.



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