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# Symbolic Violence in Contemporary Japanese Children's Literature

Case study of a Japanese folktale in its twenty-first century  
picture book renditions

Lucrezia Morellato\*

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# Abstract

This paper questions the relation between narrative and symbolic violence in a Japanese context. It stresses the importance of children's literature for socialization into a specific socio-cultural reality and it especially focuses on the role played by folktales and picture books with their representations of narrative violence. By assuming a structural perspective on the sociology of childhood, the present work engages the concept of symbolic violence and its mechanisms to stress the structures of domination present in children's literature. Particularly, the analysis of eight renditions into picture books of a Japanese folktale shows this relationship through a causal-tracing process approach to a case study employing multimodal discourse analysis in its data generation and discussion. The data examined how the faulty normalization of symbolic violence in twenty-first century realizations in picture books of *Kachi Kachi Yama* reveals a shifting idea of children and childhood in Japan.

**Keywords:** Children's literature, Japan, Violence, Bourdieu, Multimodal discourse analysis.

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Last but not least, I would like to dedicate the present work to the memory of Arrigo Albertini, friend and mentor. I would have loved for you to assess this work with your deep and snarky remarks.

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# Introduction

The process of socialization into a culture gives a child the tools necessary to confront given socio-cultural environments. Socialization, however, takes different forms in different times, places and cultures. Therefore, in order to generalize the possibilities of socialization into a sociology or anthropology of childhood, the socio-cultural backdrop of its development should also be examined (Alanen, 2001; Montgomery, 2009). This paper presents children's literature as a form of socialization accepted both in a Western and Japanese tradition. Moreover, it highlights the possibilities of two of its subgenres, folktales and picture books, to transmit cultural values through fixed plotlines that still allow the emergence of new meanings in their different, multimodal representations. The present work particularly questions the role played by narrative violence in the process of socialization, seen through the lenses of a structural sociology of childhood.

In the Western tradition, narrative violence plays an important role in the socialization of children through its exemplary or cautionary nature that nevertheless spares no gruesome details in order to engage the imagination of young readers. In the Japanese context, narrative violence plays a very similar role, especially since the end of the nineteenth century. However, its canon of folktales and their realizations in picture books still presents a taste for festive, excessive, comic violence. In fact, while Western folktales underwent a purge of sexual content first and violent content later in order to enter the realm of children's literature, some Japanese folktales and their renditions for children retained the amusing, violent mischief originally present. Thus, by focusing on entertainment rather than education, these folktales adhere less to the socialization process centred around the transmission of cultural and social values. This paper argues how these festively violent folktales in their picture book renditions also comply with the process of socialization by mechanisms belonging to symbolic violence, as defined by Bourdieu (1992; 2002), characterizing adult/child relations in the understanding of a structural sociology of childhood.

The structural sociology of childhood perceives children and adults as social agents, thus comparing the structural phenomena of childhood to other social structures, such as gender and class. Just like these phenomena, therefore, childhood presents structures of domination in a Bourdieuan understanding. These structures influence the relationship between social agents as dominant (adults) and dominated (children) and operate through symbolic violence for their invisible maintenance, reproduction and normalization. The present work seeks to outline how symbolic violence emerges from narrative violence in a Japanese context.

In order to answer this research question, this paper presents the analysis of a single Japanese folktale, *Kachi Kachi Yama* ('Click-clack Mountain'), famous for its festive, excessive violence overshadowing an unclear educational message. This

case study presents a causal-process tracing approach which outlines the evolution of eight realizations of the folktale into picture books in the twenty-first century. Next, multimodal discourse analysis serves to highlight the intermodal representations of these picture books and relate them to a Japanese context. The results of the present work offer a glimpse of the relationship between symbolic and narrative violence in Japanese children's literature and socialization, inviting more questions, approaches and research to investigate this issue both in a context-dependent and a context-independent understanding.

# Literature Review

## The Social Characteristics of Children's Literature

The quest for defining children's literature in literature criticism reflects the efforts to define democracy in political sciences: scholars cannot reach an agreement on a single definition and must resign themselves to the coexistence of multiple interpretations derived from various, and sometimes very different, standpoints. Discussion on these different perspectives has characterized the field of children's literature criticism for over two decades. Maria Nikolajeva (1997) reviews different approaches to children's literature and importantly underlines that confronting children's literature with mainstream, *adult*, literature serves as a useful starting point in understanding these varying attitudes. Perry Nodelman (2008) further elaborates how these approaches characterize the numerous definitions of children's literature, or lack thereof. An overview of these different perspectives on children's literature will assist in highlighting three characteristics relevant to the present work.

Mainstream literature overshadows children's literature, which is considered inferior, homogeneous, static and mainly oriented towards pedagogical ends (Nikolajeva, 1997; Nodelman, 2008). Academics often share this view and adhere to what Nikolajeva (1997: 21) calls the 'aggressive approach', as exemplarily presented by Zohar Shavit, who purports that 'only a minority of children's books are equal in quality to mainstream literature and therefore worth studying at all' (Nikolajeva, 1997: 22). Nodelman (2008) indicates the risks of taking this position: failing to recognize children's literature presumes an elitist assumption that significantly undervalues the influence of this literature on children's development. Furthermore, giving no definition of children's literature negates the implied distinction between 'worth studying' (Nikolajeva, 1997: 22) and not worth studying children's books. The review of this approach indicates the reason behind the quest for definition: *delimitation*, the need for criteria to identify insiders and outsiders.

A second approach claims the impossibility of defining children's literature on the basis of the impossibility of defining children and childhood, even though it actually assumes the generally accepted view of childhood as a time of enchanted innocence (Nodelman, 2008). Nikolajeva (1997: 23) defines this approach as 'ghettoizing' because it distances mainstream and children's literature even further by choosing to view childhood as a 'pastoral or utopian idyll' (Nodelman, 2008: 147). This perspective on childhood implies children as inferior beings, lacking knowledge and experience; a further implication entails recognizing children's literature as lesser than mainstream literature (Nikolajeva, 1997; Nodelman, 2008). Peter Hunt (1995; 1996) represents the pinnacle of this approach with his 'childist criticism' (Nikolajeva, 1997: 23), asserting 'that while children may be incapable of making meanings *in the same way* as literary adults, that is not to say that their meanings are any less complex' (Hunt, 1995: 233; original emphasis).

Nikolajeva (1997) highlights this perspective's lack of aesthetic considerations proper to literature criticism and Nodelman (2008) underlines its unstable basis: knowledge of what children and childhood are. Therefore, this approach introduces a key idea in understanding children's literature and in developing the argument of the present work: *the different definitions of children's literature depend on different adults' ideas of children and childhood*.

The third approach illustrated here introduces another important concept for this paper: *children's literature is adult-centred*. In fact, adults represent both producers, as writers, editors, and publishers, and consumers, as parents, teachers, librarians, reviewers, and scholars, of children's literature. Nikolajeva (1997: 24) calls it 'ambivalence', citing the work of Vivi Edström and linking it to the concept of double address developed by Barbara Walls, and focuses on the dual categories of readers, adults and children, 'consciously or unconsciously' (Nikolajeva, 1997: 24) addressed by children's books, thus highlighting adults as consumers of children's literature. Nodelman's (2008: 179) 'doubleness' recognizes this ambivalent audience, but his focus shifts throughout his critique of 'the hidden adult' (Nodelman, 2008: 206), a term that titles his work and refers to the inescapable adult presence and intention behind the pages of children's books, thus pointing at adults as both consumers and producers.

Nikolajeva's (1997) critique of an earlier work by Nodelman<sup>1</sup> and Nodelman's (2008) reflections further connect these two critics. Nikolajeva (1997: 22) defines Nodelman's initial approach as 'apologetic', since it focuses on the fundamental difference in complexity between mainstream literature and children's literature based on the assumption that mainstream literature develops through originality and novelty, while children's literature constitutes a series of variants on *loci communes* characterized by repetition and recognition. In *The Hidden Adult* (2008) Nodelman recognizes these remarks and acknowledges that focusing on different degrees of knowledge and experience as the ultimate divide between children and adults still implies children's intrinsic inferiority, thus also producing a difference of kind, rendering children less human. But Nodelman (2008) observes that often children *are* considered lesser humans not only because of their undisputable biological need for protection and guidance, but also for their alleged need for protection and guidance in society. Building on Rose's arguments, Nodelman (2008) views this hypothetical socio-cultural need as justifying the control exercised by adults in children's literature to 'secure' (Nodelman, 2008: 162) children as children and future adults. This statement relates to children's literature being adult-centred and relying on adults' understanding of children and childhood for its definition. A certain, adult idea of children and childhood will characterize children's literature to be spread among other adults and teach children how to view themselves and function in

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<sup>1</sup> Nodelman, P. (1996). *The pleasures of children's literature* (2nd ed.). White Plains, N.Y.: Longman. Cited in Nikolajeva (1997: 22).

their socio-cultural context now and in the future. This reasoning allows Nodelman (2008) to construct suggestive parallels between children and Said's Orientals as lesser humans incapable of perceiving and speaking for themselves, who need adult, colonialist guidance to develop but whose subordination remains desirable. This correlation and resulting paradox clearly illuminates the inherent self-other contrast in the adult-child definition.

If the discussion on approaches to children's literature clarified the importance of considering it adult-centred and profoundly influenced by adult definitions of children and childhood, the initial dilemma on delimitation remains uncovered. Both Nikolajeva (1997) and Nodelman (2008) agree on the impossibility of a unified definition of children's literature. However, both recognize the necessity of a working definition to identify a field of research and both indicate a definition influenced by a practical perspective that adheres to a general view on education and publishing, though still acknowledging the unyielding adulthood of the business. In Nikolajeva's words:

As a working definition we must therefore accept children's literature as literature written, published, marketed and treated by specialists with children as its primary target. By children we mean people between 0 and 18 years, which means that the scope of texts can indeed be very broad (Nikolajeva, 1997: 9).

This definition and the characteristics of children's literature will assist in narrowing the aim of the present work in genre and materials in addition to contextualizing its focus on the Japanese framework.

## Folktales, Violence and Picture Books

The definition of children's literature by Nikolajeva (1997: 9) focuses on the broadness of 'the scope of texts', but she also underlines the breadth of 'genres, kinds and modes of children's literature' (*ibid.*) in proceeding with her work. Compiling a distinctly concise list, Nikolajeva (1997) also defines folktales and states that 'Folktales, myths and legends were *never created for an audience of children*. [...] Most oral folktales are not suitable for children because *they often contain violence* and child abuse. Moreover, they are sometimes obscene and amoral' (Nikolajeva, 1997: 10; emphasis added). This definition allows the development in the present work of adult-centrism, with particular attention to its implications on and about violence, education and socialization.

Before becoming a genre in children's literature, folktales formed a part of folklore, which, in turn, constituted a part of culture (Thompson, 1977; Tatar, 1992). This understanding views folktales in the realm of anthropology, or even ethnography, and defines them more broadly as any kind of narrative, oral or written, handed down from generation to generation, with no desire for

originality, since their interest and importance comes from the authority of antiquity, embedded in the reproduction of the same patterns spiced with the difference of every retelling (Thompson, 1977). This interpretation illuminates the paradoxical balance in folktales of fixed patterns and high flexibility that effectively contributed to their survival through the centuries.

Another aspect of their persistence lies in their original purpose, entertainment (Thompson, 1977; Tatar, 1992); more precisely, adult entertainment that largely relied on violent and sexual content, random plots and bawdy humour (Tatar, 1992). This contextualization offers the background for Nikolajeva's (1997) first statement of *folktales as being adult-centred, a product and commodity originally by and for adults*. Both Western and Japanese scholars considered in this paper agree on entertainment as folktales' initial scope but, importantly, they also indicate how *folktales later became a commodity mainly for children and their focal point shifted from pure entertainment to entertaining education* (Thompson, 1977; Tatar, 1992; Karatani and Bary, 1993; Hunt, 1995; Zipes, 2002; Wakabatashi, 2008).

In the Western tradition, here represented by mainly Eurocentric and Anglophone traditions, the struggle of many nations for a proper cultural identity led to the assimilation of folktales into national agendas and the originally entertainment-oriented, subversive and humorous folktales became part of official cultures' promotion of acceptable norms and behaviours (Tatar, 1992; Zipes, 2002). This adjustment also developed from another aspect of official cultures: *the need to define children and childhood in order to control their present and shape their future*, a contextualization of the same preoccupation mentioned in the previous section. Under these circumstances, the idea of children moved from smaller but fully formed adults to developing humans starting their lives in innocence (Karatani and Bary, 1993; Jones, 2010). This perspective on children urged the modification and sanitization of folktales, viewed as important tools in introducing and grounding endorsed aspects of national cultures (Tatar, 1992; Kelley, 2008). The process of sanitization underwent by folktales, particularly in Christian countries, stripped them of their sexual content and their lewd humour, modified their random plots to introduce morals and teachings but, interestingly, avoided removing any violence (Tatar, 1992; Karatani and Bary, 1993). The reason for this absolutism lies in the pivotal role played by violence in tilting the scope of folktales from entertainment to education.

In her book *Off With Their Heads! Fairytales and the Culture of Childhood* (1992) and her book chapter '*Violent Delights*' in *Children's Literature* (1998), Maria Tatar compellingly explores the reasons behind the survival of violence in folktales and her arguments deserve discussion in the present work to assess the connection between violence, education and socialization. Violence constituted a part of folktales' subversive nature and it also filled plots with cathartic comic relief. The use of violence for amusement in folktales originates from their adult production and relates to an adult desire for empowerment, a desire still fulfilled

today in re-readings of stories where hopeless victims overcome and eventually punish rich and powerful villains. But with the developing concept of children and childhood and the resulting re-alignment of folktales, violence assumed a new role in what Tatar (1992: 73; 1998, 22) calls the 'pedagogy of fear'. Used with the intention of frightening children into compliance, violence starred in cautionary tales, whose child protagonist suffers misery and death as punishment for misbehaviour, and exemplary tales, whose child protagonist endures endless suffering until a pious death finally saves him. Importantly, besides their pedagogical intentions, these tales also helped adults, particularly parents, to cope with the loss of a child due to famine, infection and abandonment as a form of population control, which were incredibly common occurrences in Europe and North America until the twentieth century. Unfortunately, however, violence proved to be too fascinating to be scary for children; children's enthrallment with violence in folktales lies in the thrilling narrative rhythm it produces and in a surreal sense of comedy, different from the adult desire for empowerment and grounded in children's awe at any form of excess. Considering children's fascination with violence, its use in children's books shifted and retaliatory tales of bloody vendettas against villains with dubious qualities abusing victims with desirable traits and stories following a prohibition-violation-punishment pattern that allowed their protagonist to 'learn a lesson' (Tatar, 1992: 23) soon accompanied cautionary and exemplary tales. This development of violence in children's literature witnessed the sanitization of folktales. Once appropriately modified, in fact, folktales suited the requirements of entertainment and education supported by their common and already existing retaliatory theme. Importantly, the transition from cautionary and exemplary to retaliatory and lesson-oriented tales embodied an *evolution of violence in children's literature from senseless occurrence beyond human control to a moral and educational tool for future humans*.

At this point, the use of violence as an educational tool becomes important if contextualized with the discussions on children's literature, the idea of children and childhood, and the role of folktales in cultures. The starting point consists of the generally accepted image of children as developing humans, separated from adults by a gap in knowledge and experience (Tatar, 1998). This difference in degree and, as Nikolajeva (1997) and Nodelman (2008) implicitly remarked, the difference in kind, makes children inferior humans and justifies adults, as fully-fledged humans, to control and direct children's development. To accomplish this task, adult producers of children's literature employ violence as an entertaining and educational device (Tatar, 1992; 1998). Accepting the view of folktales as carriers and producers of cultural identity (Thompson, 1977; Tatar, 1992; Karatani and Bary, 1993; Zipes, 2002; Wakabayashi, 2008), this paper argues that violence as a narrative device educates children, as developing humans imagined by adults, on cultural values imbued in folktales. Outside of texts, this transmission of cultural values constitutes a stepping stone in the process of



socialization (Tatar, 1992; Galtung, 1990) guided by adults to equip children with the norms and values necessary to engage their surrounding societal and cultural context. A fascinating intersection of socialization, folktales, violence and children's literature occurs in picture books.

Picture books occupy a special place in children's literature. In Anstey and Bull's (2004: 328) analysis, Lewis describes picture books as a 'supergenre' for their characteristic interplay between text and images, captured in Anstey and Bull's (2004: 329) initial definition: 'a picture book is a book in which the written text and the illustrative text are in concordance and work interdependently to produce a meaning'. As a matter of fact, however, an interdependence of text and image produces several meanings, as the following discussion will show.

Unlike folktales, picture books represent a commodity originally meant for children. In Europe, picture books developed with the invention of printing and the first specimen dates back to 1658, when Comenius wrote and published *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (The Visible World), 'a book of pictures designed for children to read' (Salisbury and Styles, 2012: 12). From the seventeenth to the end of the nineteenth century, these productions developed into a genre known as chapbooks, cheaply produced booklets printed with crude woodcuts and destined mainly for an audience with limited literacy and means (Tayo, 2007; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). During this period, the coexistence of text and image in these books seemed hardly interdependent because texts dominated the production of meaning and images simply duplicated or decorated the text (Salisbury and Styles, 2012). These early picture books, however, aimed at improving popular literacy and promoting cultural and social values (Anstey and Bull, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012), hence the great number of adaptations of folktales into picture books that have appeared since the first Grimm's collection in 1812, published for their wide reach, pleasurable reading and malleable teachings (Tatar, 1992; 1998).

The interplay of text and image, also called 'interanimate' by Margaret Meek and 'interweaving' by Allan Ahlberg (Salisbury and Styles, 2012: 90), belongs to modern picture books that developed in the United Kingdom at the end of the nineteenth century (Anstey and Bull, 2004; Tayo, 2008; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). In this interdependence, images supply missing information in the text, while words tie images together in a plot (Salisbury and Styles, 2012); this relation rests on the understanding of Lessing's view about images, as depicting the appearance of objects in space, and words, as describing the action of objects in time (Nodelman, 2004). Furthermore, this relationship works through different mechanisms. Salisbury and Styles (2012) discuss two main techniques identified in their reading of Nikolajeva and Scott's *How Picturebooks Work*. In a 'complementary' narration (*ibid.*: 92), images and words both correspond and add meaning to each other, while in a 'counterpoint' mechanism (*ibid.*: 94) words and images fail to reflect or even contradict each other. Though different, these

methods aim at the same result: *producing multiple meanings for a developing audience* (Anstey and Bull, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012).

The origins of modern picture books need consideration to understand how these publications produce manifold meanings and address an evolving public. Modern picture books developed in the United Kingdom at the turn of the nineteenth century; various reasons influenced this outcome. The advancement of new printing technologies and a new idea of children and childhood constitute the most relevant to this paper. Firstly, growing literacy increased the mass production of picture books and new printing techniques enabled publishers to add, modify and innovate colour, layouts and formats. These improvements joined words and images in a closer interdependence and decisively debunked the notion of images as mere parallels to words (Anstey and Bull, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). Secondly, the progressively influential idea of children as forming human beings reached its peak in the concept of maturation, a child's gradual but steadily increasing comprehension of the outside world, proposed by Jean Piaget in the 1930s (Salisbury and Styles, 2012). The starting point of a picture book rests on the assumption that children naturally possess the visual codes necessary to connect an object to its depiction (Nodelman, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). Relating this assumption with the concept of maturation allows picture books to create various meanings for different levels of maturation<sup>2</sup> through techniques such as a complementary or counterpoint narrative. These meanings often develop with their readers, who progressively learn the cognitive connections from objects and reality to behaviour and ideas (Nodelman, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). The possibilities open to picture books by their immediate visual communication ability and the concept of maturation make this supergenre an ideal vessel for transmitting cultural and social values (Nodelman, 2004; Kelley, 2008). The number of meanings given to a picture book and constructed by its readers tend to present values and behaviours proper to a particular cultural and historical context, thus instilling picture books with the potential for children's socialization, since children experience through picture books their own and other social and cultural contexts, observe patterns and logics of behaviours and possibly assimilate them (Nodelman, 2004; Kelley, 2008; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). All these elements are compellingly assembled in the most favoured definition of picture books by scholars of children's literature, as presented by Salisbury and Styles (2012), given by Barbara Bader:

A picture book is text, illustration, total design; an item of manufacture and a commercial product; a social, cultural, historical document: and foremost an experience for a child. As an art form it hinges on the

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<sup>2</sup> Salisbury and Styles (2012) point out that Piaget's critics lamented his narrow and strict views on the levels of maturation. However, the present work relies on an understanding of maturation as a progression in human development, without dwelling on a more pedagogical debate on Piaget's theories.

interdependence of pictures and words, on the simultaneous display of two facing pages, and on the drama of the turning page (Salisbury and Styles, 2012: 75).

Thus far, the discussion on picture books draws two important parallels with the previous analysis on children's literature. Firstly, just like children's literature, *picture books are adult-centred, despite children being their targeted audience*, for adults represent the primary makers, distributors and consumers of picture books as authors, illustrators, editors, publishers, librarians, parents, teachers and scholars. As discussed, adult makers contribute to producing meanings for picture books; however, Nodelman's (2008: 206) 'hidden adults' who enjoy picture books as consumers also provide another array of possible readings and often influence children's interpretations according to a given social and cultural context. Secondly, *picture books largely depend on an adult idea of children and childhood for their production, distribution and use*. The idea of children as evolving human beings undergoing a process of maturation has influenced and eventually determined the development of modern and postmodern picture books since the late nineteenth century.

Furthermore, the generally assumed notion of childhood as a time of innocence also influenced the stance of picture books on the representations of folktales and violence. Folktales underwent an adaptation process in order to enter the realm of children's literature and still resisted becoming a popular genre. Together with the malleable nature of their teaching and their long-standing tradition, folktales have also endured thanks to the recognition and diffusion of their more candid versions in the form of picture books deemed suitable for children (Tatar, 1992; Zipes, 2002; Nodelman, 2008). On the other hand, despite its endurance in folktales and other forms of children's literature such as nursery rhymes, violence has struggled to survive in picture books since the late nineteenth century (Tatar, 1998; Salisbury and Styles, 2012). Due to the immediacy of visual depiction, violence remained present in its more muted tones in most popular picture books of the twentieth century, which always preferred to represent the threat rather than the act of violence (Tatar, 1992). Perceptions, however, change through time and space and in the last 50 years violence has returned as a narrative plot and as a topic in picture books from continental Europe and Northeast Asia (Salisbury and Styles, 2012).

## The Japanese Context

Thus far, the discussion has revolved mostly around European and North American literature because of the vast amount of material available that, nevertheless, serves as a springboard to reach a more focused perspective of the Japanese context on children's literature, folktales, picture books and violence in the following section.

Children's literature faces a problem of delimitation. In Japan, it also confronts questions of origin and existence (Wakabayashi, 2008; Kimbrough, 2015). According to Kimbrough (2015), scholars of Japanese children's literature belong to either one of two main sides. On the one hand, scholars such as Karatani and Bary (1993), Ericson and Wakabayashi (Wakabayashi, 2008; Kimbrough, 2015) believe that children's literature developed in Japan during the Meiji period (1868–1912), only after contact with Western theories on children and childhood, and during Japan's struggle towards state construction, nationhood and modernity. On the other hand, scholars such as Williams and Kimbrough himself (Kimbrough, 2015) argue for the existence of children's literature in pre-modern Japan, at least since the Edo period (1603–1868) or even earlier. By accepting Nikolajeva's (1997) working definition, this paper credits the hypothesis of the existence of children's literature in pre-modern Japan (at least in the Edo period); in seventeenth-century Japan publishers marketed booklets presenting a variety of topics that spanned from education to entertainment, and targeted children as an audience (Kimbrough, 2015). Undeniably, however, Japanese children's literature has attracted greater public and scholarly attention since the Meiji period.

During the Meiji Restoration and in the following Taishō period (1912–1926), Japan underwent significant historical, social and cultural changes in the name of modernization. In this transition, a couple of circumstances influenced Japanese children's literature: the introduction of Western ideas on children and childhood and the emergence of the Japanese middle class (Karatani and Bary, 1993; Wakabayashi, 2008; Jones, 2010; Kimbrough, 2015). In newly modern Japan, as in the newly industrialized West earlier on, the clear divide between children and adults appeared with the division of labour and play (Karatani and Bary, 1993). This distinction, however, came together with the idea of children as developing humans, an understanding first approached by Rousseau, elaborated by the Romantic Movement and institutionalized by Piaget in the twentieth century (Karatani and Bary, 1993; Sakoi, 2011). Combined, these ideas created the same paradox present in the West; while adults and children seemingly belonged to clearly distinct realms, the concept of maturation offers no expiration date and makes it impossible to draw a definite border between adults and children (Karatani and Bary, 1993). This paradox remains unsolved; however, its components importantly influenced the development of the education system in Japan, based on a stricter adult/child division, and the consolidation of an idea of children and childhood in the emerging Japanese middle class (Karatani and Bary, 1993; Wakabayashi, 2008; Jones, 2010).

Jones (2010: 4) argues that between 1890 and 1930 three ideas on childhood competed for dominance among the Japanese middle class: the 'little citizen' (*shōkokumin*), the 'superior student' (*yūtōsei*), and the 'childlike child' (*kodomorashii kodomo*). Importantly, Jones (2010: 6–7) also points out that in the same period of time 'the formation of a [Japanese] middle class was an historical

contingency, not a historical certainty’, it was created ‘both as an ideal and as a collection of actual human beings [...], argued into existence, built through effort, and forged in conflict’, and it ‘was imagined neither as a political force nor as an economic engine of growth but as a social foundation for national strength’. Given this definition of middle class, the idea of children as *yūtōsei* took hold as it provided Japan with ‘future well-educated citizens able to create a modern society at home and to maintain a growing empire abroad’ (Jones, 2010: 17) and this understanding agreed with the Western perception of childhood as a developmental stage for ‘superior students’ to attain both social mobility as well as maturity through education. Consequently, readings available for children became increasingly ideologically important (Wakabayashi, 2008). At the same time, folktale studies raised awareness of this genre’s malleability for teaching and transmitting embedded cultural values (Seki, 1963; Kawamori, 2003). The first collection of Japanese folktales compiled by a Japanese scholar appeared in 1910, following the compilations composed by Lord Redesdale in 1871 and Lafcadio Hearn between 1894 and 1905 (Seki, 1963). Titled *Tōnō Monogatari* and authored by the pioneer of folktale studies in Japan, Yanagita Kunio (1875–1962), the 1910 collection and those that followed presented a nationalistic inclination, focused on emphasizing Japanese uniqueness by connecting the popular folktales with myths and religion (Kawamori, 2003). Despite the continued study of folktales in the twentieth and twenty-first century, and their manifold interpretations in Japanese academia through systematic cataloguing, psychoanalytical research, structural analysis, socio-historical research and comparative studies, the first interpretation of folktales given by Yanagita left a deep imprint not just on the understanding of folktales as precious bearers of defining Japanese cultural values, but also on their ability to represent Japan internationally (Kawamori, 2003; Kelley, 2008). In fact, as Kelley (2008) argues, for younger audiences the transmission of cultural principles and their international exchange still largely relies on the representation of folklore and folktales through children’s literature, particularly picture books.

Pictorial narration has had a place in Japanese culture since the twelfth century, when illustrated scrolls (*emaki*) recounted myths and the first examples of Japanese literature, and then later *nara ehon* appeared, which were bound books representing folktales with colourful illustrations (Tayo, 2007). Children’s literature has developed since at least the Edo period and picture books represented the genre’s forefront position (Tayo, 2007; Kimbrough, 2015). As proof, Kimbrough (2015) offers an analysis of the oldest collection of picture books found in the Kyoto-Osaka area (their publication dates go back to the years between 1661 and 1677), belonging to a child, Obiya Chōkurō, who died in 1678, and thereafter the books were sealed by his father, a rich merchant, in a statue of Jizō as an offering to his son’s soul. This collection clearly targets children with the simplicity of the texts, the differing amount of illustrations according to the age group selected, and the possibility of colouring the said

illustrations despite the availability of colour-printing, demonstrated by their Edo contemporary counterparts, *kusazoshi*, illustrated books similar to later chapbooks in the United Kingdom, which also present a category called *akabon*, illustrated books specializing in folktales and bound in red paper (Tayo, 2007; Kimbrough, 2015).

Importantly, Chōkurō's picture books collection allows Kimbrough (2015) to approach the subject of violence in Japanese children's books. All of the stories presented, except a secondary tale, show gruesome beheadings, creative torture and gory details with a preference for profuse bloodshed. Given the amount and the placement of self-colouring in the books, Chōkurō seemed to particularly enjoy the grimmer illustrations (Kimbrough, 2015). Although this inclination could also speak of a personal preference, Kimbrough (2015) postulates that it more likely demonstrates the entertainment value of violence, echoing Tatar (1992; 1998); a value that struggles to prove itself as educational or even cautionary since the amount and imagination of violence overshadows the presumed cultural lessons of the tales (Kimbrough, 2015). The domination of violence over the cultural values inherent to the story questions its supposed function in the narrative and its desired effect on the audience, an observation that influences the present work.

# Theoretical Background: From Bourdieu to Children's Literature

In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu (1990: 126) defines symbolic violence as 'censored, euphemized, that is, misrecognizable, recognized violence' and identifies it as 'the most economical mode of domination' (1990: 127) in power relations of pre-capitalist societies, characterized by the unpopularity of overt, direct violence and by subjective economic and social mechanisms, exemplified by the notions and obligations of debts and gifts. In capitalist societies, on the other hand, the objectification of economic and social mechanisms into institutions indicated a preference for overt violence (Thompson, 1984) and the repositioning of symbolic violence 'in the domain of art and "culture"' (Bourdieu, 1990: 134).

Importantly, however, symbolic and overt violence represent, in Bourdieu's (2002:339) view, different but not opposite elements of 'structures of domination', seen as '*the product of an incessant (and therefore historical) labour of reproduction*, to which singular agents (including men, with weapons such as physical and symbolic violence) and institutions – families, the church, the educational system, the state – contribute'. Particularly, the reproduction of modes of domination through symbolic violence relies on the understanding that symbolic violence is '*the violence which is exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity*' (2002: 272). The mechanism of symbolic violence, in fact, operates by rendering the perception and representation of the dominated by the dominant shared and acknowledged by the dominated itself (Bourdieu, 1990; 2002). Importantly, the common understanding of the dominated by both parties surpasses the dichotomy of constraint and consent; in fact, the dominated do not adhere to the dominant's view through reason or force, but through a process of subconscious internalization employing 'schemes of perception, appreciation and action that are constitutive of habitus<sup>3</sup> and which, below the level of the decisions of consciousness and the controls of the will, set up a cognitive relationship that is profoundly obscure to itself' (Bourdieu, 2002: 340). The present work explores the emergence of symbolic violence characterizing adult/child relations in children's literature representing folktales. However, in order to discuss some salient features of symbolic violence in a contextualized field, the discussion of its adoption in other seemingly socially established relations seem pertinent.

The understanding of gender relations through symbolic violence and its mechanisms represents a good example of this concept's applicability. Bourdieu (2002: 339) himself shows how 'the dominated apply categories constructed from

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<sup>3</sup> Even though the notion of habitus plays a minor role here, its definition by Bourdieu (1990: 53) may be helpful: 'The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures.'

the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural' by recounting how the preference for taller and ideally richer men as husbands in surveys conducted on French women reveals a parallel and dominant male conception of women as physically smaller and socially less powerful. The analysis conducted by Coy *et al.* (2011), Udasmoro (2013) and Thapar-Björkert *et al.* (2016) further exemplifies the relation between symbolic violence and gender in ways meaningful to this paper.

Coy *et al.* (2011) discuss the pornification of popular culture and the symbolic violence embedded in its normalization. In fact, according to Coy *et al.* (2011), the popularization of a more sexualized mass media culture preserves the symbolic violence that characterizes and reproduces the structures of domination between men, women and prostitutes. The introduction of 'pimping' as a synonym for 'marketing' (2011:447) in everyday vocabulary sharpens the separation between men and women by stressing the dominant male understanding of female bodies as available and marketable; similarly, the debut of 'ho chic' (2011: 444) in popular fashion encourages a divide between women and prostitutes by obscuring the darkest abuses suffered by women in the sex industry. Therefore, Coy *et al.*'s (2011) analysis strongly stresses how symbolic violence works through *misrecognition*, 'the fact of recognizing a violence which is wielded precisely inasmuch as one does not perceive it as such' (Bourdieu, 2002: 272). The popularized 'pimp/ho chic' hides the perpetuation of structures of domination behind the pretence of a 'post-feminist media sensibility' (Coy *et al.*, 2011: 441) that views more sexualized content as a form of liberation for women.

Udasmoro's (2013) analysis of *sinetron* programmes in Indonesian television highlights how symbolic violence works in reproducing structures of domination by underlining the narrowness of the constraint/consent dichotomy and the importance of compliance from the dominated. According to Udasmoro (2013), in *sinetron* programmes female and male figures possess clearly defined social and cultural roles; however, the impact of these gendered portrayals lies not in direct influence over audiences' behaviour, but in their perception of representation that enables the compliant reproduction of structures of domination between men and women without the use of coercive force or persuasive reasoning. Notably, in Udasmoro (2013), as in Coy *et al.* (2011), *misrecognition* also plays an important role in the recognition of gendered roles as legitimate through the invisible workings of symbolic violence.

Thapar-Björkert *et al.* (2016: 148) stress the invisibility of symbolic violence that develops when the 'dominated stop questioning existing power relations, as they perceive the world and the state of affairs in a social activity as natural, a given and unchangeable', thus giving symbolic violence the possibility to 'occur through the mundane processes and practices of everyday life' (*ibid.*: 149). By recounting the narratives of women in present or past abusive relationships in Sweden, Thapar-Björkert *et al.* (2016) highlight how abusers exercised symbolic violence through the appropriation of the language describing the couple



relationship, a language misrecognized by the abused as the legitimate depiction of the relationship, even after it ended.

To summarize, symbolic violence is a mellow form of domination which imposes the perceptions and representations of the dominant social agents on the dominated social agents with their compliance, a compliance characterized by its independence of the constraint/consent dichotomy. Furthermore, symbolic violence invisibly reproduces structures of domination through normalization and its theoretical use particularly applies to gender relations.

The present work aims to explore the role of symbolic violence in the structures of domination between adults and children as exemplified by children's literature. The linking of an adult-child relation to a structure of domination seems strong, especially if compared with the relation between genders. However, these relationships occur on equal ground if seen through the lenses of the structural sociology of childhood, which, as Bourdieu does (1990; 2002), questions social structures and agency. Alanen (2001: 13) describes childhood as a 'structural phenomenon – both structured and structuring', ultimately defined by the interplay of social agents, such as children and adults. This understanding of childhood presents no difference with other structural social phenomena, such as class and gender, and also introduces its own inner divisions, inequalities and difference through the conceptualization of 'generation' (Alanen, 2001), a notion mirrored in the literature by the evolution of 'maturation' as the conceptualization of children in children's literature. Important for this analysis, however, remains the approach in understanding children as social agents engaged in an interplay to define 'childhood'. Through these lenses, in fact, children and adults can refer to the dominated and dominant categories presented by Bourdieu (1990; 2002) in relation to symbolic violence.

Indeed, the context of socialization through children's literature as previously characterized, theoretically agrees with a Bourdieuan definition of symbolic violence. Firstly, adults as social dominant agents impose their perception and representations of reality upon children as the dominated party in order to allow their socialization and therefore the reproduction of existing social structures, consciously or unconsciously. Secondly, the symbolic violence thus exercised falls outside of the constraint/consent dichotomy; it is important to stress here the focus of the present work on children's literature and the representations within it as opposed to its use in more institutionalized, educational settings, where the objectification of social mechanisms obscures the relevance of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1990). Finally, symbolic violence produces normalization since children's literature presents an adult understanding of socialization as 'given and unchangeable' (Thapar-Björkert *et al.*, 2016: 148), thus implementing the mechanism of misrepresentation by recognizing adult perceptions and representations as legitimate.

This paper continues to examine the emergence of symbolic violence in Japanese children's literature through the analysis of a particular Japanese folktale

in its different twenty-first century picture book renditions, in the understanding of it being a critical incident worthy of a case study approach. Although there are different understandings of the definition of critical incidents, it could be generally argued that ‘the naming of an event as a critical incident can come from any individual in an institution and signals that an event has occurred that potentially becomes the stimulus for reflection’ (Herr and Anderson, 2003: 422). Most importantly for the present work, however, the analysis of critical incidents can ‘illuminate those institutional moments in which forms of symbolic violence are made a bit more visible as tiny cracks appear in the legitimacy of institutional authority’ and suggest ‘probing into workplace<sup>4</sup> norms that help construct institutional realities and can stimulate reflection on institutional practices, exposing underlying motives and structures’ (Herr and Anderson, 2003: 421). In considering children’s literature as an important means of children’s socialization, the present work outlines the analysis of the folktale as an event that invites a reflection on how symbolic violence emerges in narrative violence that focuses on comic relief but still suggests underlying structures of domination. This contextualization of the emergence of symbolic violence proposes a case study approach.

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<sup>4</sup> Herr and Anderson’s (2003) work refers to the institutional environment of middle schools in the US and deals particularly with teachers and their interactions among themselves and with the students.

# Research Methodology: A Causal-Tracing Process Case Analysed Through Multimodal Discourse Analysis

Flyvbjerg (2006) clearly highlights five problems that result from engaging case studies in terms of validity and reliability: the perceived superiority of context-independent, general knowledge over context-specific knowledge, the difficulties of generalization, the focus on hypothesis-generation, the bias towards verification and the struggle to develop theories. Building on Flyvbjerg's (2006) arguments in favour of case studies, this paper will confront these criticisms in its context. Firstly, the importance of context-based knowledge emerged from the discussion on children's literature and its cultural specificities that imbues not just its reading but also informs different paths for children's socialization. Secondly, following the previous argument, generalization in children's literature, particularly in folktales and picture books, potentially dulls the possibility of a sharp analysis that offers new insights on generalized notions. Potential generalization deriving from a causal-process tracing approach will be taken into account in the present work in order to enforce the reliability of this case. Thirdly, the selection of the presented tale originated from a hypothesis that it was a critical case study, which highlighted the 'least likely' scenario (Flyvbjerg, 2006: 14) to clarify or disprove the emergence of symbolic violence, and agreed with the understanding of a critical incident. The following analysis, however, proves the possible conception of the selected folktale as both a critical and a paradigmatic case, thus testing an hypothesis but also disproving the case's tendency towards verification, derived from the hindered normalization of symbolic violence in the twenty-first century renditions of the presented folktale. Finally, although this paper does not postulate the formation of a theoretical framework, it does suggest the validity of its results through their possible engagement in other theoretical and social contexts. These reasons agree with the thoughts of Flyvbjerg (2006) who postulates the possibilities of advancement in a field even by analysing a single case.

In order to actualize these methodological observations and answer the research question posed, this paper presents a case study that follows a causal-process tracing (CPT) approach and is analysed through multimodal discourse analysis (MDA).

Using a case study allows the possibility to highlight the processes of perception and motivation in relevant actors in order to understand their reasoning (Blatter and Haverland, 2012). In the present work, these mechanisms characterized the selection of picture books depicting a particular Japanese folktale as a case study; in fact, underscoring the embeddedness of this folktale in the literature discussed will lay the groundwork for its analysis through the lenses of MDA to consider the emergence of symbolic violence. Thus, in order to

account for contextual elements originating in the literature and data produced by MDA in the theoretical discussion on symbolic violence, this paper employs a CPT approach to case studies, which stresses ‘the assumption that a plurality of factors work together to produce the outcome of interest’ (*ibid.*: 24) and the possibility of ‘gaining a comprehensive overview over the temporal unfolding of the causal-process, [...] provide a dense description of critical moments, [...]’. The CPT approach also emphasizes ‘gaining deep insights into the perceptions and motivations of important actors’ (*ibid.*: 25) through inductive reasoning, conceivably leading to a ‘possibilistic generalization’ (*ibid.*: 31), the application in other cases of the same group of configurations indicating a similar outcome (*ibid.*). In the present work, relevant literature gives the temporal development of this Japanese folktale in its cultural context, while its different representations and their selection signals its relevance in twenty-first century Japanese children’s literature and socialization.

Children’s picture books represent the first contact between literature and children, a contact deeply influenced by the emotional pleasure that children enjoy through images (Nodelman, 2008; Painter *et al.*, 2013). The informational value of children’s picture books often accompanies an educational value, the possibility of transmitting social and cultural values through both language and images (Anstey and Bull, 2004; Tayo, 2007; Kelley, 2008, Salisbury and Styles, 2012; Painter *et al.*, 2013; Kimbrough, 2015). After accepting this premise, the question of how to analyse picture books in order to examine the presented values and their representations becomes important in order to understand the role of picture books in children’s socialization (Nodelman, 2004; Salisbury and Styles, 2012; Painter *et al.*, 2013). The present work agrees with the arguments presented by Painter *et al.* (2012) in *Reading Visual Narratives: Image Analysis in Children’s Picture Books* for analysing picture books through MDA.

Painter *et al.* (2012: 2) start by stressing the importance of seeing picture books ‘as a bimodal form of text in which the visual modality plays just as important a role as the verbal one in creating meaning and shaping readers’. Painter *et al.* (2012) place their methodology in the realm of systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) in order to examine picture books as both visual and verbal texts since SFL allows the recognition of visual and verbal systems of meaning and their adaptation to MDA. In Painter *et al.* ’s (2012) words, ‘with respect to language, the systems of meaning choices have been elaborated at a number of levels – as choices in genre (e.g. narrative/explanation/argument, etc.), as choices at the level of discourse-semantics (e.g. different conversational moves), as choices in grammar and lexis and as choices in phonology’ (*ibid.*: 9). The visual text also forms systems of meaning, but is ‘organised into sets of choices within each of the three metafunctions’ (*ibid.*: 7), an ‘ideational meaning’ that shows what is expressed as a content or subject, an ‘interpersonal meaning’ that examines the relations among the characters and between text producers and text consumers, and the ‘textual aspect of meaning’ which puts the text ‘in relation to co-text and

context, through devices of linking, referring, foregrounding and backgrounding' (*ibid.*: 7). Importantly, however, the present work relies on SF discourse analysis rather than semiotics, thus stressing the intersection of different semiotic systems, rather than their mechanisms as abstract structures (*ibid.*).

Painter *et al.* (2013) explore this interplay between semiotic systems through the mechanisms of commitment and coupling, both dependent on the concept of instantiation, 'the relation between the potential for meaning that inheres in the system of language (and/or another semiotic) and the specific, actual text which incorporates limited choices and realisations from the overall system/s' (*ibid.*: 134). On the one hand, commitment refers to how accurately a particular semiotic choice is applied, for example the expressions '*an attractive young Australian girl with a healthy tan*' and '*a girl*' (*ibid.*) show different degrees of commitment. In bimodal forms of text, such as picture books, commitment travels on binary tracks, language and images, two distinct semiotic systems that share a common semiotic load, but also multiply its meanings by negotiating their prominence throughout the narration (Painter *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, coupling explores the interdependence of language and images in a bimodal text through mechanisms of convergence and divergence that increase the array of meanings available (*ibid.*).

The present work proposes to analyse the commitment and coupling mechanisms of the main narrative events, as outlined by major twentieth-century scholars of Japanese folktales, in eight twenty-first century picture books depicting the Japanese folktale *Kachi Kachi Yama* (かちかち山, 'Click-clack Mountain'). This analysis will show an interesting interdependence between images and texts through MDA, while a CPT approach will underscore a telling development among the versions examined and eventually lead to the emergence of symbolic violence.

Lastly, an important note on the semiotic basis of MDA. The methodology presented by Painter *et al.* (2013) rests on Kress and van Leeuwen's work on social semiotics (2006) in *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design*. In this book, the authors repeatedly stress the cultural embeddedness of semiosis, especially in the context of visual composition. Since the present work explores picture books in a contemporary Japanese framework, culturally relevant notes on visual composition seem necessary (Hudson and Wadkins, 1988; Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila, 2006). The Japanese writing system presumes a reading procedure that follows a right-to-left, top-to-bottom order, which affects the presentation and retention of information, differing from a Western left-to-right, top-to-bottom reading progression (Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006). Also, the co-existence of at least two writing systems, Chinese characters (*kanji*) and one syllabic alphabet (*hiragana*), directly influences the readers' perceived ability to negotiate meaning through images and text (Schwartz and Rubinstein-Ávila, 2006). Finally, Japanese folktales, like many folktales worldwide, present recurring narrative formulas as mnemonic mechanisms to encourage retention

and further retellings (Nodelman, 2004; 2008). These elements constitute the basic characteristics of picture books' progression, composition and narration in Japanese children's books, also predominantly present in the picture books examined.

## The Case: *Kachi Kachi Yama* かちかち山

The Japanese folktale *Kachi Kachi Yama* enjoyed a long-standing popularity in folktale studies, children's literature and popular culture. Both Ikeda (1960) and Lanham and Shimura (1967) place *Kachi Kachi Yama* among the most well-known folktales in Japan, with representations that transcend folktale collections and commentaries to introduce plays, children's TV shows, children's literature, textbooks, manga, anime and even a ropeway<sup>5</sup>. This popularity, however, differs from other famous Japanese folktales. As Kelley (2008: 61) points out, 'folktales are entertaining' and 'also instruct readers about values, beliefs, and social practices collectively known as ideologies'. The bulk of the most popular Japanese folktales conform to this description by overtly celebrating values such as obedience, perseverance and loyalty, with no shortage of violent retaliation, punishment and reward plots, and prohibition-violation-punishment schemes<sup>6</sup> (Seki, 1963; Tatar, 1992; Karatani and Bary, 1993). *Kachi Kachi Yama*, on the surface, presents a violation-punishment structure featuring a violent retaliation to justify a vendetta, which seems to be the ideological end of the story. In this tale, however, violence stops being an accessory to the narration and becomes its protagonist in an excessive, festive way for a gruesomely comic effect. To further develop this argument, a short summary of the story, given by the Standard Dictionary of Japanese Literature (*Nippon Bungaku Daijiten*, 日本文学大辞典) in 1950 and translated by Ikeda (1960), seems pertinent.

An old man traps a bad badger in the mountain, brings it home and hangs it from the ceiling, tying its legs together. After he has gone to work again, the captive badger persuades the wife to untie the rope. When freed, the badger kills her and makes soup of her. He disguises himself as the wife, and when the old man comes home, serves him the soup calling it badger soup. The badger taunts the old man that he has eaten his own wife, then flees. A rabbit comes along while the old man is crying, and promises to seek revenge for him. The rabbit by deception makes the badger carry firewood on his back, and from behind strikes a flint, "Click-click", to set fire to the firewood. The badger questions the sound, and the rabbit says that there is such a noise here because the place is the Click-Click Mountain. A similar explanation is given to the sound of burning wood on his back, before he realizes that he is afire. Red-pepper plaster is applied as an ointment to the burns by the rabbit. When the burns have finally healed, the rabbit invites the badger for boating. Riding a wooden boat

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<sup>5</sup> The [Kachi Kachi Ropeway](#) on Lake Kawaguchi offers a panoramic view of Mount Fuji and its theme derived from a novel by Dazai Osamu, a re-reading of the traditional folktale.

<sup>6</sup> Most famously: Kintaro, Urashima Tarō, Issun-bōshi, The Crab and The Monkey, The Cut-tongued Sparrow, The Mouse Bride and Momotarō (Seki, 1963).

himself, the rabbit provides the badger with a boat of mud, which dissolves in the water and drowns the badger (Ikeda, 1960: 230).

As Ikeda (1960) points out, this standardized version emerged in Japan after the 1870s, together with the institution of standardized Japanese language and a unified education system that needed to reduce the regional variations in order to establish a single ideological system. This summary also presents the main narrative events upon which the present work builds its analysis: the badger's trapping, the wife's murder, the involuntary cannibalism, the vengeful promise, the elaborated burning, the hurtful ointment, the boating and the drowning. This sequence progresses through retaliation, whose excess constitutes festive violence, which overshadows revenge as a mere plot device.

The choice of examining this particular folktale instead of or in combination with other folktales rests on various reasons. Firstly, as Tatar (1992; 1998) suggests, festive violence has a greater entertainment factor and a lesser information value in folktales because their originally intended audience are adults, which also explains their relative scarcity in folktale collections, given the difficulty of adapting festive violence to ideological agendas. *Kachi Kachi Yama* fits these parameters since the violent events outnumber their usual functionality in a violation-punishment tale for entertainment rather than for highlighting revenge as a possible ideological theme. Most scholars (Ikeda, 1960; Seki, 1963; Karatani and Bary, 1993; Wakabayashi, 2008), in fact, often cite this tale as a paramount example of folktales *not* being for children. Therefore, the enduring popularity of *Kachi Kachi Yama* in Japanese children's literature, particularly in children's picture books, emphasizes again how *adult-centred* this genre is in its theme as well as its marketing, since it builds on an entertainment factor conceptually intended for adults but marketed for children. Secondly, festive violence also makes this tale an interesting field to examine the mechanisms of symbolic violence. By accepting the invisibility of symbolic violence, an ideologically loaded folktale would show clear attempts at children's socialization into a particular culture, while an entertaining folktale would fall off the radar of cultural agendas. *Kachi Kachi Yama* belongs to the latter group of folktales that, by favouring entertainment over message, furthers the invisibility of symbolic violence. Lastly, the analysis of the interdependence between text and images in a series of picture books realizing the same folktale over a period of time will show how symbolic violence worked in influencing children's self-representation through the adult lenses that narrate and illustrate the story. This mechanism particularly plays on the crucial absence of children and the presence of talking animals as characters, which triggers a process of distance and identification considered significant for children's socialization (Flynn, 2004). The prominence of animals over humans in *Kachi Kachi Yama*, especially in the most violent sequences, will show how these mechanisms of identification and distance serve the misrecognition of symbolic violence.



Given the resources available in time, funds and word limit, the present work will present the analysis of eight Japanese picture books realizing *Kachi Kachi Yama*, published or reprinted between 1990 and 2014 by publishers linked with the Japan Book Publisher Association. All the books selected target children between the ages of five and eight, employing only two writing systems: mostly the basic syllabic alphabet (*hiragana*) and occasionally Chinese characters (*kanji*), a choice that suggests an early forming reader, probably aided by a competent, adult reader. Importantly, the analysis will adopt a CPT approach and chronologically follow the images represented in the picture books since the oldest illustrations belong to a picture book published in 2001 featuring woodblock prints from 1880, which influence the intertextuality among the other picture books presented. The MDA analysis will then focus on the concepts of commitment and coupling for each realization to highlight a progression of meaning creation in and among the picture books, before discussing the findings in the theoretical framework.

## Data Generation

The first picture book examined reports 2001 as the publication date, but it also reproduces woodblock prints from 1880 to recount *Kachi Kachi Yama*. These images have great intertextual resonance among the other picture books of this story, hence the priority in their analysis. The 22 double-spread images present a superimposed text, always above the image, relatively small in font and presenting a predominance of syllabic characters with a few elementary Chinese characters. These features suggest the prominence of images over text in the commitment of meaning. Parallels in the visual composition of different scenes also suggest this emphasis on images to communicate meaning, particularly in the most important twists of the story that present vendetta as the ideological theme: the wife's murder followed by the vengeful promise and the badger's drowning, followed by the old man's gratitude (a topic absent in the official recording of the story, but present in most of the examined picture books). The wife's murder and the badger's drowning are parallel images since in both cases the perpetrator has a dominant position at the top of the illustration and its action presents a downward vector towards the frightened victim; this parallel masterfully conveys the idea of righteous retribution in a negative sense: mischief equals punishment, often equal in kind<sup>7</sup>. The vengeful promise and the old man's gratitude, on the other hand, realize a positive retribution by depicting a distance between the characters in the former and their contact in the latter, a representation of reward also coupled in convergence by the text in the latter scene that profusely expresses the old man's gratitude<sup>8</sup>. Character depiction also plays an important role in establishing relationships among characters and has intertextual importance. Most

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix, Group I, Figure 1. and 2.

<sup>8</sup> Appendix, Group I, Figure 3. and 4.

notably, the dimension and clothing of the characters organize their hierarchy: the animal characters seem subordinate to the human characters by being smaller, thus having less focus in the scenes of their interactions. The clothing further damages the position of the badger by depicting the animal as naked in its interactions with the old couple and dressed when dealing with the rabbit, which always appears dressed, even in its dialogues with the old man. This hierarchy appears coupled by divergence in the text: while the badger seems the most discriminated against visually, its verbal representation seems more elaborate than the other characters, always referred to by general terms ('rabbit' うさぎ, 'old man', おじいさん 'old lady' おばあさん) whereas the badger is also characterized as 'wicked' and 'old' (わるだぬき, 古だぬき). These results suggest that this picture book masterfully gives dominance to the violation-punishment plotline and lessens the relevance of festive violence by demeaning the position of the animal characters not just in relation to humans, but also among themselves. It also stresses the idea of righteous retribution both positively (rabbit) and negatively (badger), offering the possibility to the child reader of identifying with either animal.

An edition with images and text from 1990, reprinted in 2003, shows a shift in the representation of righteous retribution and an emerging interest in festive violence. This picture book presents three types of images: colour double spreads, black and white double spreads and black and white drawings always on the bottom-left corner of the page. The latter type of images outnumbers the first two (14 out of 24), suggesting a more prominent role for the text that presents a bigger font and very few Chinese characters, implying a developing but more autonomous reader than the previous edition. It follows that the rarer double spread images suggest the importance of certain events in the plotline. Considering the previous argument on parallels, the negative righteous retribution appears early on in the story with the scenes of the badger's trapping and the wife's murder as both highlight the perpetrator by dedicating a full side of the spread exclusively to the old man tying up the badger and the badger brandishing the mortar<sup>9</sup>. The idea of positive righteous retribution still develops between the rabbit and the old man, but only textually, even though it importantly influences how festive violence starts to emerge. Only this picture book presents the substitution of 'revenge' (かたき) with the verb 'to punish' (こらしめる) to describe the rabbit's actions, implying a process rather than a single payback. This distinction seems clear in the prominence of the rarer double spreads; the ones depicting the badger's suffering (the elaborate burning, the hurtful ointment) not only appear as black and white drawings, but also reappear as colour double spreads without text<sup>10</sup>. Therefore, these results present a

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<sup>9</sup> Appendix, Group II, Figure 5. and 6.

<sup>10</sup> Appendix: Group II, Figure 7. and 8.

preliminary shift from the dominance of the violation-punishment theme and its ideological message towards the entertainment provided by festive violence.

The 1990 edition also starts to shift the badger's position in the hierarchical relations among the characters and build a relationship with the reader. The badger's lack of clothing throughout the narration and its enhanced size in the more violent scenes invite the reader to see it as inferior to the other characters, but still the main focus in the representations, thus drawing more attention to its trials than its role in the plotline. The subsequent 2002 edition takes this representation to an extreme and invites outright identification of the reader with the badger. In this picture book, the rabbit also loses its clothing, but becomes prominently smaller than the disrobed badger, which reaches the size of humans. While this representation gives more salience to the badger, it also allows more focus on its suffering, which appears exaggerated and introduces festive violence. The elaborated burning and the hurtful ointment sequences visually dominate the verbal representation by contrasting a brief text with the images of an increasingly swelling, suffering and reddening badger, whose exaggerated trials culminate in its first appearance as a drowned corpse in the final spread<sup>11</sup>. The excess in these representations creates festive violence, also supported by the mirth expressed by the tormenting rabbit. Interestingly, this book features no positive righteous retribution between the rabbit and the old man, not even in the textual rendition; the focus remains on the initial parallel of negative righteous retribution between the badger's trapping and the wife's murder, expressed by complementary compositions as in the 1990 edition<sup>12</sup>.

Although the 2002 edition expresses festive violence visually, it refrains from gruesome details textually; most notably, the soup made out of the old lady's flesh by the murdering badger disappears. This feature reflects the targeting of a younger audience of readers, expressed by the disappearance of Chinese characters from the text, suggesting a lesser linguistic ability. The next three editions share this omission from the narration for the same reason, suggested by the textual or visual representations. A 2004 edition targets its intended younger audience by coupling a text devoid of Chinese characters with a visually simple style, both text and images proceeding from left to right, an unconventional layout for a Japanese picture book. This book attempts to highlight again the violation-punishment pattern of the story by lessening the enjoyment of the badger's suffering; however, its visual representations still focus on the badger in the most violent scenes by previous means: increased size and stripped appearance<sup>13</sup>. Furthermore, just like its 2002 predecessor, the negative righteous retribution is reinforced by parallel compositions, while the positive righteous retribution remains absent<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Appendix: Group III, Figure 9. and 10.

<sup>12</sup> Appendix: Group III, Figure 11. and 12.

<sup>13</sup> Appendix: Group IV, Figure 13.

<sup>14</sup> Appendix: Group IV, Figure 14. and 15.

The 2009 edition resolves this absence by reinterpreting the 1880 woodblock prints in a more simple style to highlight 'vendetta' as a theme. The 14 colour double-spread pages that form this picture book lessen the hierarchical relationships among the characters by clothing both the badger and the rabbit, and levelling their sizes with human characters. Furthermore, the rhythm of the narration follows a clear pattern of positive righteous retribution. Instead of concentrating on the badger's trapping at the beginning, this picture book starts by presenting the happiness of the old couple by combining an idyllic image and everyday conversation about meal preparation<sup>15</sup>. This scene invites the reader to bond with the old couple, thus creating outrage at the wife's subsequent murder and revelling at the promise of revenge, whose realization occupies the exact centre of the double spreads<sup>16</sup>. The idea of positive righteous retribution is eventually exhausted in the last scene, which equates the badger's drowning with the old man's renewed happiness<sup>17</sup>. This pattern clearly reconstructs the violation-punishment structure and, even though the badger's torments correspond to a slightly enlarged figure<sup>18</sup>, this edition represents the least violent among the ones analysed.

A simple and cartoonish drawing style also features in the first 2010 edition that also targets a younger audience by employing only the syllabic alphabet. While the text simplifies the story through rhymes and a large number of onomatopoeias, the images focus on character depiction rather than setting, and re-establish the hierarchical relationships among characters viewed so far through clothing and sizes. The novelty of this edition, however, rests on the depiction of the badger as a victim<sup>19</sup>. In this picture book, the badger loses its 'wicked' connotation and images of its suffering occupy 11 of the 16 colour double spreads forming the book; most notably, the badger's torments spread throughout the text, from its trapping to its death, without concentrating solely on the rabbit's vengeful actions<sup>20</sup>. The cartoonish style, the simple text and the recurring suffering bring back a festive violence that was missing in the previous edition and emphasize it through the clear enjoyment the rabbit shows in tormenting the badger, in a reference to the 2002 edition.

A contemporary 2010 edition experiments with the representation of the badger as a victim in order to present a clear positive righteous retribution between the badger's actions and its later trials. This edition, in fact, assigns the badger as a wronged victim in the first part of the story, where the point of view of the badger is visually represented by it pleading for its life and its pleasure in taking revenge on the old man by making his wife into soup, a plot device

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<sup>15</sup> Appendix: Group V, Figure 16.

<sup>16</sup> Appendix: Group V, Figure 17.

<sup>17</sup> Appendix: Group V, Figure 18.

<sup>18</sup> Appendix: Group V, Figure 19.

<sup>19</sup> Appendix: Group VI, Figure 20.

<sup>20</sup> Appendix: Group VI, Figure 21. and 22.

ignored since the 2004 edition<sup>21</sup>. These two scenes visually dominate the first part of the picture book as much as the elaborate burning and the hurtful ointment sequences prevail in the second<sup>22</sup>. This dichotomy is reminiscent of the previous parallels between the badger's trapping and the wife's murder, on the one hand, and the rabbit's vengeful promise and the old man's gratitude on the other. By creating this particular correlation, however, this book brings festive violence and the ideological theme together by coupling the former's entertainment value with the latter's educational input.

This balance between entertainment and educational purposes also appears in the last picture book examined, printed in 2010 and reprinted in 2014, but it shows extreme representations that label this book as the most violent in its intermodal discourse. The peculiarity of this picture book rests on its interpolated representations that rhythmically separate the colourful text and the black and white images, and on its unprecedented and convergent coupling in the cannibalistic sequence. Like the previous edition, the visual parallel between the wife's murder and the badger's sufferings performs a negative righteous retribution through their visual significance; all these scenes, in fact, represent the only ones that clearly dominate the text. In addition, this book breaks with the past representations of the wife's murder by switching from an impending killing to the actual striking of the old lady's head<sup>23</sup>. This actualization of violence also explains how this picture book indulges for the first time in the festive violence proper to the cannibalistic sequence in order to reinforce the educational message. While the cannibalistic element textually appears in four of the eight cases examined, its visual coupling emerges unprecedented in this edition in a three-image sequence of the badger as the wife serving soup, the old man eating the soup and the badger revealing itself<sup>24</sup>.

These results represent a fluctuating but seemingly increasing intermodal representation of festive violence in children's picture books of the peculiar folktale *Kachi Kachi Yama*. Furthermore, the explored balance between the entertainment and educational values of these picture books sets the stage for discussing their relationship with symbolic violence in the power relations between adults and children in twenty-first century Japan, where the problem of violence and its cultural roots became more prominent in conjunction with the social, political and economic insecurities of the 1990s.

## Data Analysis

All the picture books examined have different editors, different authors wrote their texts and different illustrators created their images. It could be argued,

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<sup>21</sup> Appendix: Group VII, Figure 23. and 24.

<sup>22</sup> Appendix: Group VII, Figure 25.

<sup>23</sup> Appendix: Group VIII, Figure 26. and 27.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix: Group VIII, Figure 28.

therefore, that the fluctuating representation of festive violence pertains to marketing choices and artistic preferences. Understandably, this analysis must admit a certain amount of bias in the tendency of changing ideas of childhood and children in the context of contemporary Japanese children's literature derived from profit-driven choices of producers of children's literature, artistic choices of text and image creators, and educational insights which influenced the continuing reprinting of this tale and its consumption by the targeted audience and the auxiliary, 'hidden', adult audience; not to mention personal choices and subjective views.

However, all the *Kachi Kachi Yama* picture books presented belong under the umbrella of Nikolajeva's (1997) definition of children's literature as their creation, publication, marketing and prospective consumption targeted children between 0 and 18 years of age and adults educating them. In fact, they all present either a children's library collection as an ultimate destination or contain a commentary to present the educational possibilities of these stories to 'hidden' adult readers (Nodelman, 2008: 206). In addition, the reprinting of 1880 woodblock prints as a picture book and their great intertextual resonance suggest the significance of the Meiji period in forming modern Japanese children's literature.

These renditions of *Kachi Kachi Yama* also signal this story as a paradigmatic example of a violent folktale with an embedded, adult-centred nature. The great entertainment value this tale derives from festive violence speaks of its adult origin and consumption, while the simplified text and images presented underscore a developing re-alignment to perceived children's sensibilities. In fact, following Tatar (1992; 1998), this folktale shows the passage from an adult sense of empowering subversion through violence to a childlike awe at a thrilling narrative with excessive, violent, comic elements that nevertheless culminate in a tool of the 'pedagogy of fear' (*ibid.*: 73; 22) to admonish children about righteous retribution, positively or negatively enforced. The intermodal commitment of this pedagogical meaning in the presented picture books pays homage to the Japanese pictorial tradition that recognized the leading role of narrative violence in cultural transmission since Chōkurō's picture books collection (Kimbrough, 2015).

The picture books analysed, however, never outright identify righteous retribution as the pivotal pedagogic meaning of *Kachi Kachi Yama*, but they rather depend on coupled verbal and visual cues to suggest this result. The verbal depiction of the badger as 'old', 'wicked' and 'ill-natured' accompanies its visual representation as increasingly morally inferior to the old couple and the rabbit, who show proper human behaviour through their civilized clothing. Furthermore, the progressive representation of the badger as bigger than the rabbit and as big as the human couple accentuates its salience in the visual narrative development, pointing to an increasing inducement for the identification of young readers with this character (Flynn, 2004). The escalating verbal presentation of pivotal events in the story through onomatopoeias and

dialogue couples this process of identification by relating to a childlike way of expression, easily accessible to younger readers or listeners. This attention to the badger's actions and trials tilts the scale towards a righteous retribution negatively enforced and away from the positive reinforcement suggested by the rabbit's narrative.

These results suggest three elements pointing to symbolic violence. First, the representation of *Kachi Kachi Yama*, a very violent folktale originally devised for adult entertainment, as containing valuable pedagogic meaning shows how its adult-centred nature remains invisible and encourages the misrecognition of structures of domination. Second, the gradual focus of the intermodal representation of the badger's figure to suggest identification speaks not just of the adults' dominant position in the narrative but also highlights the surpassing of the consent/constraint dichotomy in perceived children's reception. Third, the fluctuating directness in the intermodal representation of violence toward the badger, a figure importantly connected to children through identification, relates to an unstable idea of children and childhood in twenty-first century Japan, an evolving idea of childhood that questions the perceived dominance of the 'superior student' ideal (Jones, 2010: 6).

The invisibility of adult agency in *Kachi Kachi Yama* narratively develops from the passivity of the old couple to the animals' actions. However, the old man's conviction that the rabbit will avenge his wife bestows a cloak of authority on the animal and its actions, suggesting the legitimacy of the unfolding positive righteous retribution. Thus, the gratefulness of the old man as a reward for the rabbit's actions expresses misrecognition in a Bourdieuan perspective since it recognizes violent actions perpetrated under adult authority (or its surrogate) as legitimate and condemns equally violent deeds committed without an authoritative support, such as the ensnared badger murdering the old lady to avoid being made into soup and to take revenge on the old man for its capture. The increasing latency of the narrative focusing on positive righteous retribution reinforces the misrecognition of violent actions authorized by adult or authoritative figures as legitimate by presenting them as a category 'constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear natural' (Bourdieu, 2002: 339).

While the narrative presenting positive righteous retribution receded, the narrative presenting negative righteous retribution through the figure of the badger, its actions and its trials took the spotlight. The intermodal representation of the badger became visually more salient and verbally more characterized, suggesting a closer identification for children through the enjoyment of the big, brown lump of a character in the image and its identification as the only character with a given 'wicked' nature. Importantly, the intention behind this effort towards identification comes from adult producers and consumers, who seek in the figure of the badger the misbehaving child and its punishment in order to complete the transition of the folktale from entertainment source to educational

tool (Seki, 1963; Thompson, 1977; Tatar, 1992; 1998; Flynn, 2004). Therefore, the folktale gradually highlights through more or less narrative violence the adult perception that misbehaviour induces direct or indirect punishment. In a Bourdieuan perspective, this consideration exemplifies symbolic violence by entering the 'schemes of perception, appreciation and action that are constitutive of habitus' and operating 'below the level of the decisions of consciousness and the controls of the will', thus dodging the constraint/consent dichotomy and encouraging the reproduction of this structure of domination through children's socialization.

The directness and intensity of the intermodal representation of this value of socialization, however, varies in the picture books analysed, seemingly questioning the idea of children and childhood through the normalization of the violation-punishment structure. In transforming from an entertaining to an entertainingly educational folktale, *Kachi Kachi Yama* normalizes the correspondence between violation and punishment through the different relevance of the positive and negative righteous retribution narratives and the suggested readers' identification with the figure of the badger. However, the varying forms of festive violence and their fluctuating presence in the story suggest a changing attitude towards ideas on children and childhood in twenty-first century Japan.

Nevertheless, the challenge to the idea of children and childhood in Japanese children's literature seems to have societal resonance, considering the relationship among the adult producers and signalling the relevance of choosing twenty-first century picture books as primary sources for the present work. On the one hand, the skeletal form of the represented story already exists, since *Kachi Kachi Yama* in children's picture books retraces the outlines of the patterned folktale reported in the Standard Dictionary of Japanese Literature. Although this opportunity opens the possibility for new and radical reinterpretations or the ethnographic tracing of a cycle of folktales (Ikeda, 1960; Thompson, 1977; Mulhern, 1991), it also offers a good field for inquiring about societal trends since the fixed, elementary outline allows a certain malleability of twists and details. On the other hand, the rendition of folktales through picture books also involves the negotiation of an intermodal representation, often among more creators, that can open several possible meanings (Nikolajeva, 1997; Rose, 2001; Painter *et al.*, 2013). In the case presented here, all the picture books representing *Kachi Kachi Yama* each involved two creators, a writer and an illustrator who certainly needed to compromise their artistic views with the outline of a determinate story within an established cultural framework with various market requirements outlined by editors.

In the Bourdieuan understanding of this paper, these choices reconnect to the subconscious presence of habitus, which characterizes preferences and delineates decisions by working beyond the conscious mind and a reasoned will (Bourdieu, 1990; 2002; Udarmoro, 2013; Thapar-Björkert *et al.*, 2016). Importantly, in order to avoid confusion with political or cultural ideology, the habitus at work



here concerns the Japanese middle class, the same class consuming the greater part of children's literature and perpetrating the most common idea of children and childhood in Japan today, the 'superior student' (Jones, 2010). At first glance, the rigidity of this concept of childhood deriving from its recognition by educational institutions of higher levels seems to support children's picture books depicting a well-known Japanese folktale that presents a violation-punishment structure to enforce positive and negative righteous retribution with festive, excessive violence. The fluctuation in the intermodal representation of festive violence, however, speaks of a wavering position for this concept of childhood, representing the sense of 'vague anxiety' in the reinterpretation of folktales in children's literature that Leheny (2006: 27) points out. Leheny (2006) argues that Japanese society has been experiencing a sense of anxiety since the 1990s and throughout the economic recession that influenced a rethinking on violence and particularly violence and youth. Leheny (2006) offers a political and legislative background to the changes in the social perception of youth violence, exploitation and incrimination that argues in favour of the much disputed relation between youth and violence suggested in other works (Sakamoto, 2000; Shibuya *et al.*, 2008; Kimbrough, 2015).

Considering the sense of anxiety related to violence and youth portrayed by Leheny (2006) and argued in relation to other realms of children's consumption (most prominently, video games), the present work suggests that the fluctuating representation of intermodal festive violence lies in the uncertainty of an established idea of children and childhood in contemporary Japanese society, thus hindering the reproduction of the structures of domination in the relation between adults and children through normalization. The symbolic violence that operates in *Kachi Kachi Yama* through the invisibility of the positive righteous retribution narrative to cement the symbolic power of authoritative figures, and the overtaking of the consent/constraint dichotomy through the suggested identification with the badger's figure and its negative righteous retribution narrative, seem to waver in the reproduction of structures of domination through the normalization of the violation-punishment scheme, questioning the ideas of childhood and children in contemporary Japanese society.

## Ethical Considerations

The primary material presented in this work required no intermediary in its acquisition. No interviews were conducted to gain additional information and no sensitive subjects were directly addressed to raise particular ethical questions.

## Conclusions

The present work explores how symbolic violence emerges from narrative violence in Japanese children's literature. Particularly, the analysis focuses on a single Japanese folktale, *Kachi Kachi Yama*, in its twenty-first century realizations in picture books. This research question developed from the review of existing literature on the characteristics of children's literature and the role played by violence in two of its subgenres, folktales and picture books. The structural characteristics of children's literature discussed revealed the importance of the latent adult presence in the genre in order to consider it a tool of socialization, centred around adult understandings of children and childhood. The consideration of the Japanese context for the emergence of children's literature highlighted the same tendency; furthermore, it showed the Western-influenced development of an already existing Japanese children's literature coupled with the conceptualization of children as *yūtōsei*, 'superior students' (Jones, 2010: 6), in the Meiji era, still a popular idea today. In the adult quest for socialization in children's literature, folktales surfaced as an ideal conduct for cultural and social values, both in a Western and in a Japanese context. Ideal for their cultural specificities and original, adult-centred production and consumption, folktales move from entertainment to educational purposes during the formation of national identities. This process starts in the Meiji Restoration for Japan and also sees the creation of a unified education system, which prompted the collection and consolidation of regionally different folktales into a standardized Japanese canon, whose consumption shifted from an adult to a child audience. The standardization of folktales worldwide caused a purge of contents deemed unsuitable, which surprisingly excluded violence, recognized as a valuable asset of the narration for its power in retaining children's attention and highlighting narrative elements considered worth teaching. Merging standardization and children's consumption, folktales came into children's literature mainly as picture books, the 'supergenre' (Anstey and Bull, 2004: 328) of children's literature for their immediate representation and countless possibilities for meaning formation. While popular all over the world, picture books in a Japanese context developed spontaneously from a long tradition of pictorial representations of texts; interestingly, and contrary to a Western development, violence still strongly influenced Japanese picture books, at least in the interplay between text and image, if not visually.

Therefore, the existing literature suggested a link between narrative violence expressed in picture books' realizations of folktales and the adult-centred tendency towards socialization in children's literature in both a Western and Japanese context. In order to explore this connection sociologically, this paper introduces the Bourdieuan concept of symbolic violence. In the context of a structural sociology of childhood, the adult/child correlation resembles gender or class relations for its opposing social agents. These contrasts in childhood, gender

and class suggest, in a Bourdieuan view, the existence of structures of domination that symbolic violence aids in invisibly maintaining, reproducing and normalizing. The role of symbolic violence in gender studies informs the present work by underscoring three elements recurring in the analysis: the invisible workings of symbolic violence, its overtaking of the constraint/consent dichotomy and its normalizing mechanism. In fact, as women misrecognize invisible structures of domination that normalize their perception by the dominant social agent as their own, beyond forceful or rational reasoning, so children embark on their social lives by unknowingly accepting an adult understanding of their identities that normalizes and reproduces dominating structures. In order to argue the connection between this sociological theory and children's literature in a Japanese context, the present work treats the Japanese folktale *Kachi Kachi Yama* as a critical incident, an event pointing to symbolic violence and inviting further reflection.

Understanding this folktale as a critical incident beckons the treatment of *Kachi Kachi Yama* as a case study, reliable for its context-based knowledge, which nevertheless suggests a potential generalization, and valid for its hypothesis-testing nature, tends more towards falsification than verification. The analysis of *Kachi Kachi Yama* follows a CPT design that allows data generation to focus on the different factors pointing to symbolic violence and discussing them through MDA, an analysis developed in the field of systemic-functional linguistics to simultaneously engage different semiotic systems in a single discourse.

The data analysis shows great intertextuality among the twenty-first century renditions of *Kachi Kachi Yama* and common patterns in their intermodal realizations, suggesting sociological trends beyond marketing strategies and artistic preferences on the part of the producers. Symbolic violence, therefore, emerges through different renditions of the positive and negative righteous retribution narratives in the story, the role of the badger as a character and its perceived relationship with the reader, but stumbles when the festive, excessive nature of narrative violence questions the violation-punishment structure enforced by the story. While the reproduction of structures of domination and the overtaking of the constraint/consent dichotomy seem successful, the normalization of these structures remains unresolved in several renditions of these tale by their focus on festive narrative violence overshadowing the socialization value embedded in its violation-punishment scheme. The missed fulfilment of normalization in the picture book renditions of this folktale underlines the relevance of their contemporaneity. In fact, scholars suggest that Japan has been experiencing a sense of vague anxiety related to violent events, overt or covert, since the 1990s. This sense of insecurity also engulfed the discourse on children and their exposure to violence through law enforcement, politics, economy and media, and prompted a shift in the dominant idea of children and childhood, namely the 'superior student', in the Japanese context.

As a suggestion for further research, this paper proposes the possible implementation of different sociological theories, such as Elias's (2000) understanding of aggression or Galtung's (1990) triad connecting direct, structural and cultural violence, to engage the relation between historical, political and economic events with the discourses unfolding in the context of Japanese children's literature. Another possibility lies in the generalization of this paper's hypothesis and method to investigate comparative cases in Japan or across countries that present similar stories oriented towards festive violence.

# Appendix

Group I: Images published by Kodansha in 1880 and reprinted in 2001 and 2005

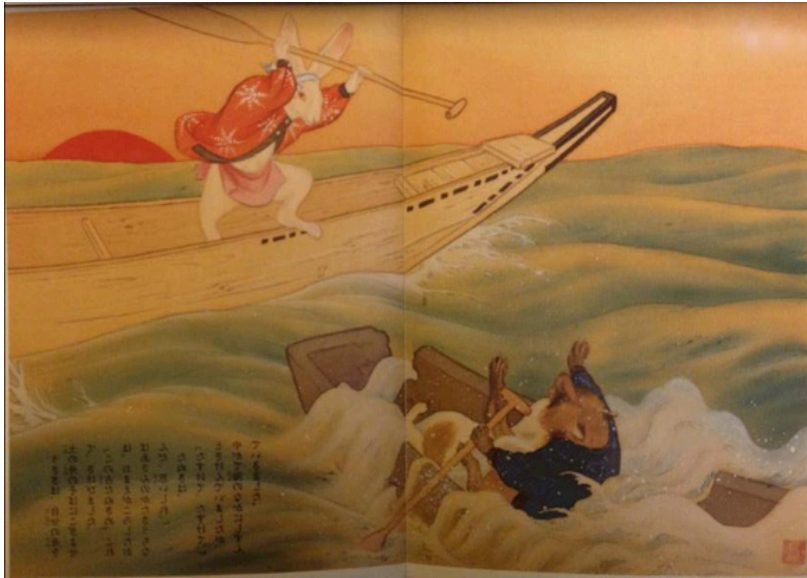


Figure 1. The Wife's Murder



Figure 2. The Badger's Drowning

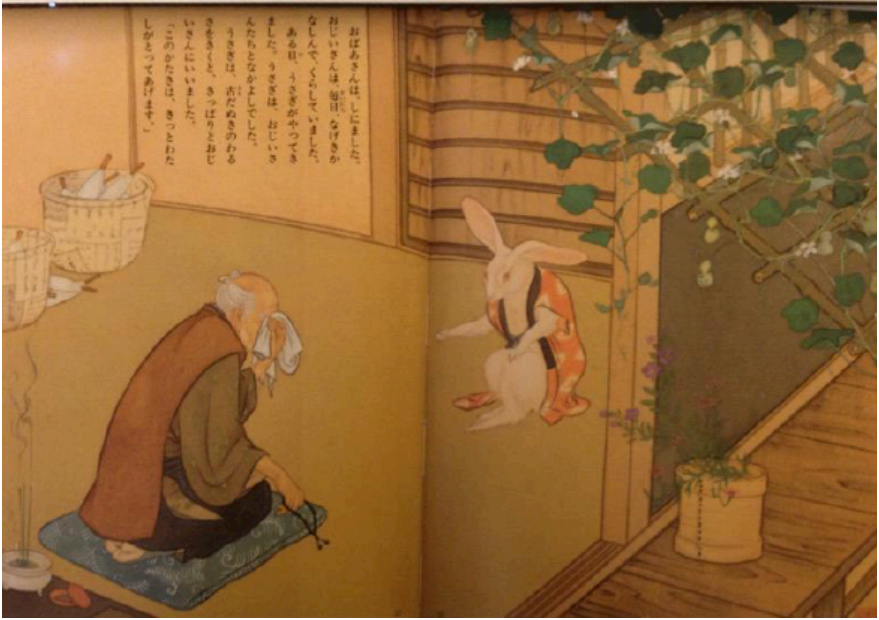


Figure 3. The Rabbit's Vengeful Promise



Figure 4. The Old Man's Gratitude

Group II: Images published by Kaiseisha in 1990 and reprinted in 2003



Figure 5. The Badger's Trapping



Figure 6. The Wife's Murder



Figure 7. The Elaborate Burning (a)



Figure 8. The Elaborate Burning



Group III: Images published by Foebler-Kan Co., Ltd. in 2002 and reprinted in 2003



Figure 9. The Elaborate Burning

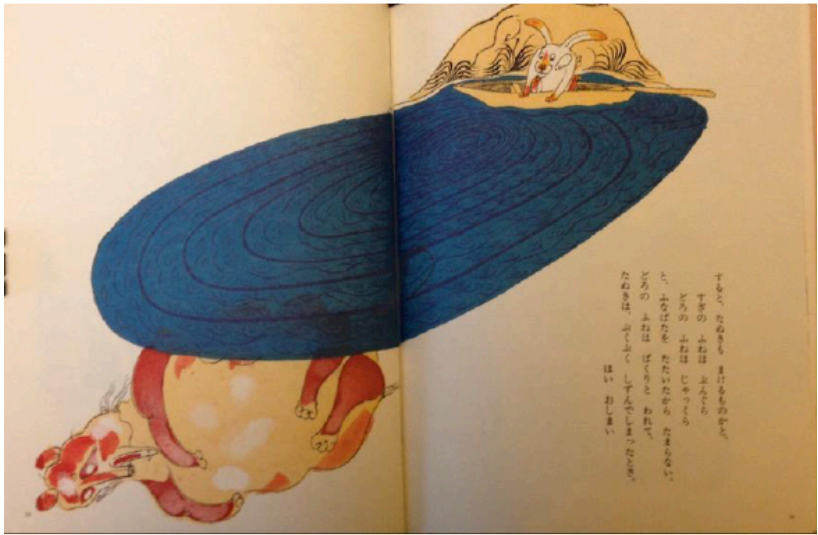


Figure 10. The Badger's Drowning



Figure 11. The Badger's Trapping



Figure 12. The Wife's Murder

Group IV: Images published by Iwanami Shoten in 2004 and reprinted in 2013

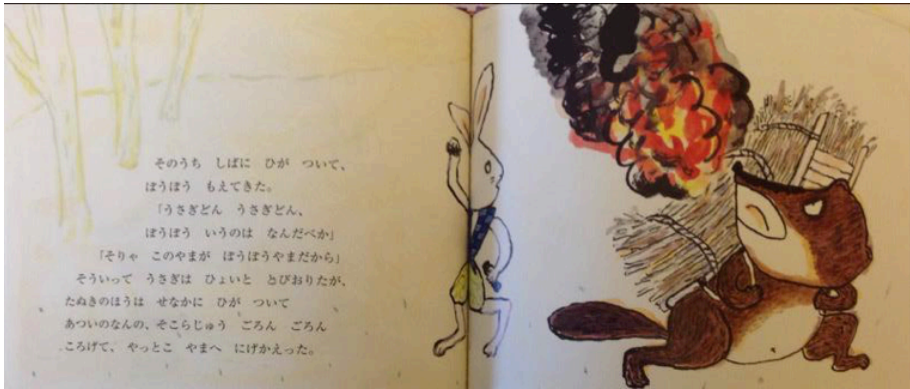


Figure 13. The Elaborate Burning

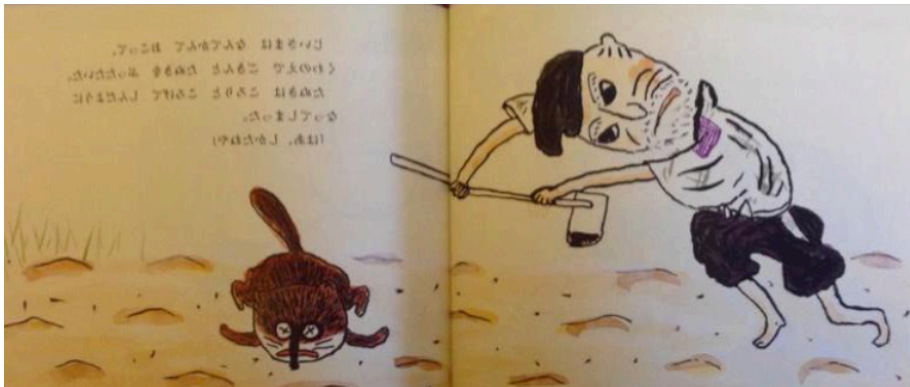


Figure 14. The Badger's Trapping

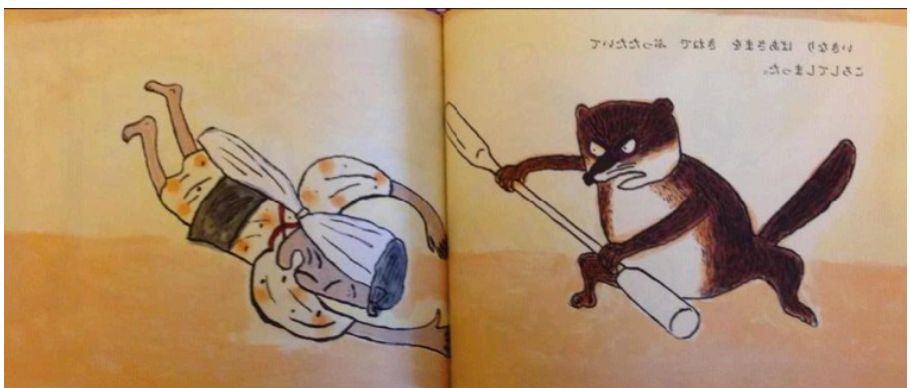


Figure 15. The Wife's Murder

Group V: Images published by Shogakukan in 2009



Figure 16. The Old Couple Preparing a Meal



Figure 17. The Rabbit's Vengeful Promise



Figure 18. The Badger's Drowning and the Old Man's Gratitude



Figure 19. The Elaborate Burning

Group VI: Images published by Kin no Hoshisha in 2010



Figure 20. The Badger's Pleading



Figure 21. The Elaborate Burning (a)



Figure 22. The Elaborate Burning

**Group VII: Images published by Akane Shōbo in 2010**



Figure 23. The Badger's Pleading



Figure 24. The Badger Making Soup

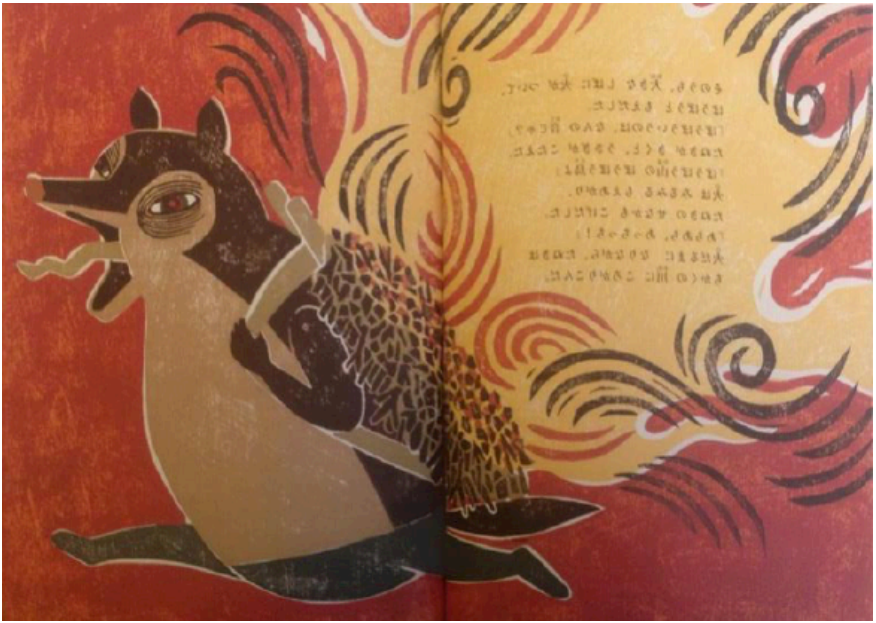


Figure 25. The Elaborate Burning



Group VIII: Images published by Iwasaki Shoten in 2010, reprinted in 2014

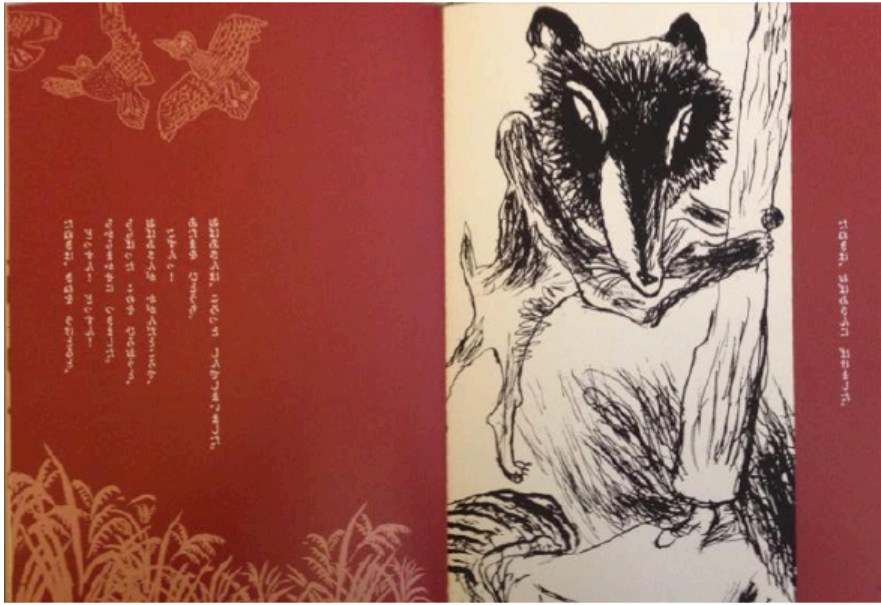


Figure 26. The Wife's Murder

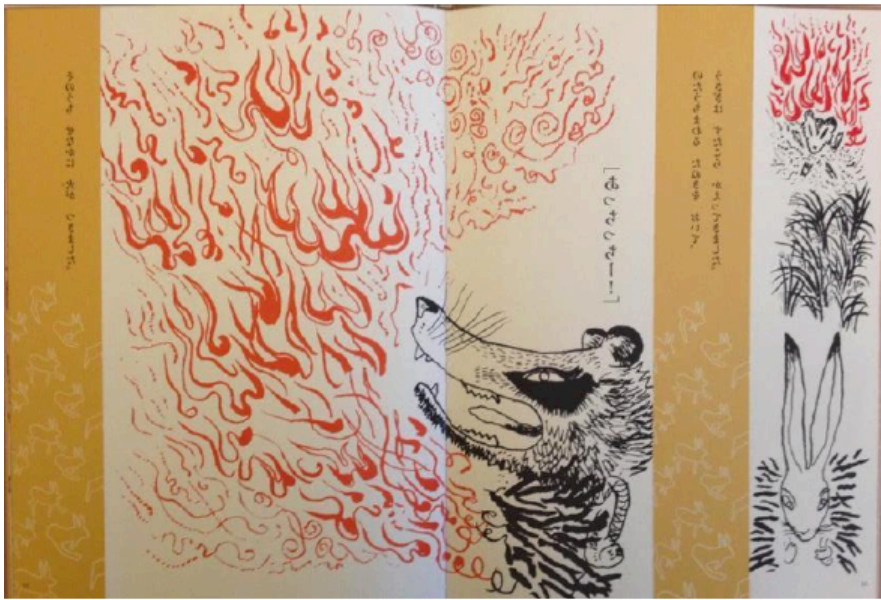


Figure 27. The Elaborate Burning



Figure 28. The Badger Making Soup (1)

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