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Heavenly Citizens of the World: Child Readers and the Missionary Cause

Janicke S. Kaasa

THE WOODCUT THAT FEATURES regularly on the cover of the monthly missionary children's magazine *Børnevennen* (The Children's Friend, 1868–86) shows six men placed in a landscape. Each of them seems to represent a heathen culture, and all of them are either reading or appear to be listening to those who are reading from what most probably are bibles. The cross figures prominently in the middle, placed against a background of water, mountains and a rising or possibly setting sun, enveloped in a radiant light that falls upon the group. Spruce and birch tower on the left, their roots intertwined with the palm trees on the right, stretching upwards to the banner on which the magazine title is written. Below the woodcut are the words from the Acts of the Apostles 16:9, 'Come over and help us!';¹ referring to Paul's vision of a Macedonian man begging for help and his interpretation of this vision as a call from God to go and preach the gospel. Both the woodcut and the quotation anticipate the magazine's emphasis on pagan people in faraway countries and on missionary work and suggest the importance of the written word in that context. What is more, the cover seems to establish the active role of the reader through the call from the heathens, implying his or her responsibility to come over and help, or at least to preach the gospel.

The first magazines aimed at child readers in Europe were published during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Briton John Newbery's

¹ 'Kom over og hjælp os!' (*Børnevennen. Missionsblad for Børn*, December 1868). All translations are by me, unless otherwise stated.

The Lilliputian Magazine, published in 1751, is considered the very first, but both the Swedish *Wecko-Blad til Barns Nytt och Nöje*, published by Samuel Hasselberg in 1766, and the Dano-Norwegian *Ungdommens Ven*, published in 1770, are early examples of European children's magazines.² Although relatively short-lived, and without a large readership, these early children's magazines illustrate the important changes in European eighteenth-century print culture, of which periodicals were a driving force.³ These developments in the production and spread of children's periodical literature continued into the next century, and by the time the Norwegian missionary children's magazine *Børnevennen* was established in 1868, there had been a slow but steady increase in the number of magazines of general interest aimed at Norwegian children, leading up to a significant growth of new periodicals in the 1870s.⁴

The first attempts to establish specialised missionary magazines for children in Norway, however, appeared some thirty years earlier, in the late 1840s, and thus correspond with the growth in religious children's magazines elsewhere in Europe. These periodicals came about in a larger flora of religious literature aimed specifically at children, such as books with religious content, Bible editions, catechisms and psalm books (see Haarberg's chapter in this book).⁵ In the 1840s and 1850s, when the children's magazine became an increasingly important genre in Norway, there were also attempts to establish general-interest children's magazines, such as Niels Andreas Biørn's successful weekly *Børnevennen* (1843–50) in addition to more ephemeral endeavours like *Huusvennen* (1847) and *Illustreret Børneven* (1856).⁶ Evidently, like their predecessors, these publications also featured religious materials, and their editors were often, like Biørn,

² S. Svensson, *Barnvännen och skolkamrater. Svenska barn- och ungdomstidningar 1766–1900 sedda mot en internationell bakgrund* (Stockholm, 2018), p. 93; N. Shine, 'Børneblade i Danmark fra 1770–1900', *Børn og Bøger*, 4 (1971), 91–8, at p. 91. It should be noted that many of these early periodicals also catered to adults, and Nina Christensen argues that *Ungdommens Ven* was aimed at young girls as well as their mothers and aunts (N. Christensen, *Videbegær – Oplysning, børnelitteratur, dannelse* (Aarhus, 2012), p. 178).

³ E. Krefting et al., *En pokkers skrivesyge. 1700-tallets dansk-norske tidsskrifter mellom sensur og ytringsfrihet* (Oslo, 2014), pp. 25–6. See also E. Krefting et al., 'Introduction', in E. Krefting et al. (eds), *Eighteenth-Century Periodicals as Agents of Change: Perspectives on Northern Enlightenment* (Leiden, Boston, 2015), pp. 1–13.

⁴ E. Økland, 'Norske barneblad', in T. Ørjasæter et al., *Den norske barnelitteraturen gjennom 200 år: Lesebøker, barneblad, bøker og tegneserier* (Oslo, 1981), p. 103.

⁵ S. Hagemann, *Barnelitteratur i Norge inntil 1850* (Oslo, 1965), p. 248; E. Økland, 'Norske barneblad', p. 100.

⁶ E. Økland, 'Norske barneblad', p. 99.

priests. Both the general-interest magazines and those that were more specifically dedicated to religious content, including missionary magazines, contributed to widening the scope of religious reading materials for children as well as the contexts for this reading beyond school and beyond the catechism.⁷ Certainly, these developments are not unique to Norway. Yet the missionary magazines aimed at Norwegian children offer a useful vantage point for considering the staging of eighteenth-century child readers as well as the transnational contexts for the periodical literature that was made available to them.

Like so many of these early periodicals, the first missionary magazines were neither numerous, widely read nor long lived and could be considered marginal and of minor importance. Nonetheless, they possibly paved the way for later and more prolific publications, and they testify to the range of reading materials that were available in the early stages of Norwegian printed children's literature. They also offer valuable insight into the various roles the child readers were ascribed in children's magazines generally and in the missionary magazines specifically: as citizens of the world and of the heavens, and as potential future missionaries.

In the following I examine the staging of the child reader in the early Norwegian children's magazines that were issued by or affiliated with missionary movements, with particular emphasis on the very first children's missionary magazine in Norway, *Missionsblad for Børn* (Missionary Magazine for Children, 1847–8). The chapter argues that the Norwegian missionary magazines are important to be able to understand the ways in which the Norwegian child was staged as an active participant in religious life and, as such, in print culture. Furthermore, by tracing the foreign models from which these publications drew both inspiration and actual material, the chapter investigates some of the transnational networks of and contexts for these magazines.

CHRISTIAN CITIZENS IN TRAINING: RELIGIOUS CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES

Reading religious periodicals from the nineteenth century requires 'careful and ongoing methodological reflection', Mark Knight notes, pointing to the complexities of the term 'religion' and of interpreting theological material from earlier periods and of often little-known religious groups.⁸ Similarly,

⁷ E. Krefthing *et al.*, *En pokkers skrivesyge*, p. 185.

⁸ M. Knight, 'Periodicals and Religion', in A. King *et al.* (eds), *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (London, 2016), p. 356.

Felicity Jenz and Hanna Acke remind us how missionary periodicals ‘can inform us of historical events, actors, and places, but must all be read cautiously, and with an awareness of missionary biases’, and how these biases were often political as much as religious.⁹ These remarks are also valid for the study of the early religious magazines that were aimed at Norwegian children, many of which were affiliated to *Brødrevnene*,¹⁰ the Norwegian branch of the evangelical Moravian Church with strong ties to Germany and Denmark.¹¹ Indeed, several of the early Norwegian missionary magazines for children were published in the south-western town of Stavanger, where the Moravian Church played a significant role in Christian life from the 1820s until the turn of the century.¹² In this chapter, however, I am less concerned with the theological contents of the magazines as such, and more interested in how the missionary cause had an impact on the staging of the child reader, and how we through these publications may gain a broader understanding of the ways in which the child reader was cast by writers, editors and publishers in mid-nineteenth-century print culture.¹³

Missionary magazines have mainly been approached ‘as sources of information on religious, imperial, and cultural history. As historical documents, these often well-indexed and increasingly accessible publications have provided a treasure trove of information.’¹⁴ In the case of missionary magazines for children, academic interest in them as either sources or primary texts has been limited, and due to an apparent lack of literary value, missionary publications are often left out of general historical overviews of children’s literature.¹⁵ Another aspect concerns the scarcity of mate-

⁹ F. Jenz and H. Acke, ‘Introduction’, in F. Jenz and H. Acke (eds), *Missions and Media: The Politics of Missionary Periodicals in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Stuttgart, 2013), p. 10.

¹⁰ *Herrnhuter Brüdergemeine* in German.

¹¹ L. Harberg, *Hundre år for barnet: Norsk Søndagsskoleforbund 1889–1989* (Oslo, 1989), p. 13; I. Sagvaag, *Søndagsskulebarnet i Søndagsskulebladet. Utgreiing om Børnebibliotheket/Barnas Søndagsblad* (Bergen, 1999), p. 12.

¹² P. Øverland, *Kortere avhandlinger om Brødreminigheten i Norge* (Trondheim, 1987), pp. 10, 40. Also significant is that the School of Mission and Theology was founded in Stavanger in 1843 by the Norwegian Mission Society.

¹³ For child-centred approaches to children’s literature, see for example Ch. Appel and N. Christensen, ‘Follow the Child, Follow the Books – Cross-Disciplinary Approaches to a Child-Centred History of Danish Children’s Literature 1790–1850’, *International Research in Children’s Literature*, 10:2 (2017), 194–212; M. O. Grenby, *The Child Reader, 1700–1840* (Cambridge, 2011).

¹⁴ A. King et al. (eds), *The Routledge Handbook to Nineteenth-Century British Periodicals and Newspapers* (London, 2016), p. 159.

¹⁵ Sagvaag, *Søndagsskulebarnet i Søndagsskulebladet*, p. 36. For instance, they are omitted from the major historical overviews of Norwegian (T. Birkeland et al. (eds),

rials: these first missionary magazines for children were often small and unassuming, printed on cheap paper and with inexpensive binding. Consequently, many copies have been lost. Nevertheless, the materials we *do* have access to in the libraries and archives shed light on the early children's missionary magazines and invite us to approach them not merely as historical or theological sources, but as texts worthy of study in their own right. As Anja Müller points out in her discussion of eighteenth-century English periodicals and prints, 'it is high time that these texts were considered in their function as printed mass media for the construction of childhood.'¹⁶ No doubt, this applies to nineteenth-century missionary children's magazines, too.

In his study of the religious periodical and newspaper press in England during the late eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, Louis Billington identifies a growth of specialised religious magazines in the period between 1790 and 1840 in which journals promoting foreign missions played a pioneering role.¹⁷ Between the 1820s and 1840s this growth became especially noticeable in the increase of religious children's magazines, which were usually small, with brief texts and a few simple illustrations.¹⁸ *The Child's Companion; or, Sunday Scholars Reward* (1824–1932), issued by the Religious Tract Society, *The Children's Friend* (1824–1930) and the Wesleyan *Child's Magazine* (1824–45) are early examples of successful and long-lived publications, whereas later examples include the *Church Missionary Juvenile Instructor* (1844–90), the London Missionary Society's *Juvenile Missionary Magazine* (1844–66) and the *Juvenile Missionary Herald* (1845–1905).¹⁹ In Germany important publications were *Jugendblät-*

Norsk barnelitteraturhistorie (Oslo, 2018); Hagemann, *Barnelitteratur i Norge inntil 1850*; T. Ørjasæter et al., *Den norske barnelitteraturen gjennom 200 år: Lesebøker, barneblad, bøker og tegneserier* (Oslo, 1981), Swedish (G. Klingberg, *Svensk barn- och ungdomslitteratur 1591–1839* (Stockholm, 1964); Svensson, *Barnavänner och skolkamrater*) and Danish children's literature (I. Simonsen, *Den danske børnebog i det 19. aarhundrede* (Copenhagen, 1966); T. Weinreich, *Historien om børnelitteratur – dansk børnelitteratur gennem 400 år* (Copenhagen, 2006)).

¹⁶ A. Müller, *Framing Childhood in Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals and Prints, 1689–1789* (London, New York, 2009), p. 6.

¹⁷ L. Billington, 'The Religious Periodical and Newspaper Press, 1770–1870', in M. Harris and A. Lee (eds), *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (Rutherford, London, Toronto, 1986), p. 119.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 120–1; K. Drotner, *English Children and their Magazines, 1751–1945* (New Haven and London, 1988), p. 25; Svensson, *Barnavänner och skolkamrater*, pp. 48–9. Even earlier examples include *Katholischer Kinderfreund* (Vienna, 1785) and *The Youth's Magazine or Evangelical Miscellany* (London, 1805–67) (Svensson, *Barnavänner och skolkamrater*, pp. 48–50).

tern (1836–1916) and the *Die Sonntagsschule* (1863–c. 1925), and among the most popular examples of such magazines in the Scandinavian countries – influenced by the publications in England and Germany – were the Swedish *Dufwo-rösten* and *Christlig Barntidning* (1848–61), the Danish *Børnenes Blad* (1877–98) and the Norwegian *Børnenes Søndagsblad* (1874–99).²⁰

As some of these magazine titles indicate, many of the publications were affiliated to the Sunday school movements, which were hugely influential in distributing religious texts to children.²¹ In England, Robert Raikes' Sunday schools in 1780 mark the beginning of the organised Sunday school, whereas the first Sunday school in Germany can be dated to 1824.²² In Norway early variants of Sunday schools date back to 1734 and to Sunday gatherings for children organised by Brødrevennene. In the 1750s these became more organised, not least with the Haugean movement at the turn of the century, and gradually took the form of Sunday schools. There was a significant increase in the 1870s, concurrent with the development towards a civil public school,²³ but the very first official Sunday school in Norway was the Stavanger Søndagsskole started on 10 March 1844, inspired by and financially supported by the Religious Tract Society (1799) in England.²⁴ In addition, tract societies had been established in Bergen, Christiania and Stavanger (1832) and had begun publishing texts, mostly translations from English, German and Swedish.²⁵ This, and the Sunday school movement, certainly played a major role in the development of religious magazines for children in Norway, including those focusing on the missionary cause.

Søndagsblad for Børn (Sunday Magazine for Children) appeared only as a trial issue on 7 July 1844 and is possibly the first Sunday school magazine for children in Norway. The issue is an eight-page leaflet, edited by Erik Nicolai Saxild and published in Christiania (today's Oslo).²⁶ Clearly,

²⁰ S. Svensson, *Barnavänner och skolkamrater*, pp. 49–50.

²¹ C. S. Hannabuss, 'Nineteenth-century Religious Periodicals for Children', *British Journal of Religious Education*, 6:1 (1983), 20–40, at p. 21; S. Svensson, *Barnavänner och skolkamrater*, p. 49.

²² The first Sunday school in Sweden was organised in the 1850s, and in Finland in 1870 (I. Sagvaag, *Søndagsskulebarnet i Søndagsskulebladet*, p. 21).

²³ A. Danbolt, 'Den kristelige søndagsskolen – et middel i Lutherstiftelsens kamp for luthersk kristendom. Søndagsskolen og indremisjonen i 1870-årene', *Tidsskrift for Teologi og Kirke*, 79:1 (2008), 48–65.

²⁴ I. Hagen, *Barnet i norsk kristenliv: søndagsskolen i Norge gjennom 100 år* (Oslo, 1947), p. 36.

²⁵ E. Molland, *Norges kirkehistorie i det 19. århundre*, vol. 1 (Oslo, 1979), p. 164.

²⁶ Saxild (1787–1846) was a former teacher, co-director and inspector at the Christiania Sunday school, and a key figure in the establishment of the city's first child asylums in 1839. He published several texts for children, and his attempt to establish

Søndagsblad for Børn was not a successful endeavour. In the postscript dated 29 June 1844 it becomes clear that Saxild, having invited subscribers in January earlier that year, has not yet gathered enough subscribers to cover the costs of the magazine. He once again encourages parents and teachers in and outside the city to subscribe but admits that the magazine's future is uncertain.²⁷ The magazine explicitly addresses children aged between five and twelve but was intended as a Sunday read for the whole family to facilitate an appropriate marking of the Sabbath. The materials that would provide such an appropriate marking, based on the first and only issue, were religious stories, questions on the scripture, hymns and poetry in the form of an excerpt from the prominent author Henrik Wergeland's poem *Aftenbøn*. The postscript also tells us something about the magazine's overall purpose: *Søndagsblad for Børn*, Saxild hopes, will enable children's faith to bear fruit for a happy childhood and youth, for the fatherland, and finally for 'the eternal Sabbath, the divine, eternal home!'²⁸ Thus, it shares with the missionary magazines the function of preparing the child for the divine afterlife and of promoting the idea of the child as what D. J. Konz refers to as 'a pious, responsible Christian citizen in-training.'²⁹

THE FIRST MISSIONARY CHILDREN'S MAGAZINES IN NORWAY

The first two examples of children's magazines that were affiliated to the missionary movement in Norway, *For Ungdommen* (For the Youth, 1846–9) and the previously mentioned *Missionsblad for Børn* (1847–8), were both established and edited by Johan Christian Johnsen.³⁰ A newspaperman and politician, Johnsen (1815–98) is today mostly known for his efforts to promote general knowledge and education. He initiated and established several

Søndagsblad for Børn rather late in his life must be seen in context with his longtime engagement in children's welfare in the city.

²⁷ In an announcement in the later *Børnevennen*, the magazine's future seems to depend more on divine intervention than on financial circumstances: "The Children's Friend", God willing, is to be published next year in the same way and on the same terms as this year' ("Børnevennen" udkommer, om Gud vil, næste Aar paa same Maade og same Betingelser som iaar'): (*Børnevennen*, December 1868, p. 16).

²⁸ 'den evige Sabbat, det himmelske, evige hjem!' (*Søndagsblad for Børn*, 1844, p. 8).

²⁹ D. J. Konz, 'The Many and the One: Theology, Mission and Child in Historical Perspective', in B. Prevette *et al.* (eds), *Theology, Mission and Child: Global Perspectives* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 23–46, at p. 32.

³⁰ K. Aukrust, *Menighetsblad og andre religiøse og kirkelige tidsskrifter i Norge: en foreløpig oversikt* (Oslo, 1991), p. 14; J. B. Halvorsen, *Norsk Forfatter-Lexikon 1814–1880: paa Grundlag af J.E. Krafts og Chr. Langes 'Norsk Forfatter-Lexikon 1814–1856'*, vol. 3: I–L. (Kristiania, 1892), p. 164.

periodicals, his most successful by far being the illustrated and widely read weekly *Almuevennen* (The Friend of the Common People), which he edited from 1848 until 1893.³¹

For Ungdommen was published in Stavanger and anticipates *Almuevennen* in that it features assorted texts on various topics that all qualify as general knowledge.³² The religious and edifying purpose of the magazine, however, is clear from the very beginning: in the first issue of July 1846 Johnsen invites his readers to join him on a journey, more specifically ‘the life journey’: ‘I have already told you what I consider to be the destination of my life journey, namely Heaven, and it would be dear to me if you agree: because only if this is so, could we travel together.’³³ Later the magazine is presented as the very means to help prepare the young readers for such a journey – ‘to look towards the eternal life, that will be the task of this magazine’³⁴ – to guide them towards Heaven, and to make sure that their role as divine citizens does not yield to that of world citizens. This life journey, then, makes up the framework for the magazine’s miscellaneous contents with stories on topics such as zoology, history, geology and geography as well as fables, poetry and biographical texts. Knowledge of the human world, Johnsen explains, makes for a better world, but more importantly it prepares the young reader for the journey towards their heavenly home. In this way, the staging of the child reader as a world citizen is made subordinate and preparatory to what Johnsen considers to be the child’s main role, namely that of the heavenly citizen.

The magazine’s evangelical tone and emphasis on the child’s journey towards eternal life are recognisable in many of the religious children’s

³¹ Johnsen also issued a Norwegian translation of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1861–2 (*Onkel Toms Hytte eller Negerlivet i de amerikanske Slavestater*). Although not credited, it is possible that Johnsen himself translated the text: a decade earlier he had written a series of articles in the weekly *Morgenbladet* entitled ‘Nord-Amerika, dets Folk og Institutioner’ (North America, its People and Institutions, 1852–3).

³² As such, the magazine is comparable to *Billed-Magazin for Børn* (Picture Magazine for Children, 1838–9), the first children’s magazine in Norway (see J. S. Kaasa, “Saavel fra fjerne Lande som fra vort eget Hjem”. Importert materiale i *Billed-Magazin for Børn*”, in A. M. B. Bjørkøy et al. (eds), *Litterære verdensborgere: Transnasjonale perspektiver på norsk bokhistorie 1519–1850* (Oslo, 2019), pp. 310–29).

³³ ‘Jeg har allerede ovenfor sagt eder, hvad jeg anseer som min Livsreises Maal, nemlig Himmelen; og det skulde være mig kjær, hvis I deri være enige med mig; thi kun I dette Tilfælde kunde vi reise med hinanden’ (‘Livsreisen’, *For Ungdommen*, July 1846, pp. 1–2).

³⁴ ‘at rette Blikket mod det evige Liv, – det vil være dette Skrifts Opgave’ (*For Ungdommen*, July 1846, p. 8).

magazines and in the missionary magazines particularly. However, *For Ungdommen* does not associate with the missionary cause until it returns after a halt in publication with a third volume in 1849 by an unknown editor.³⁵ Now the magazine's subtitle has been somewhat altered and mentions the missionary cause explicitly: *Et Maanedsskrift for opbyggelig og underholdende Læsning, med særdeles hensyn paa Missionsagen* (A monthly for edifying and entertaining reading, with particular regard to the missionary cause). The change is also noticeable in the magazine's contents, with several of the stories now describing the works of missionaries in various parts of the world. Early in the next year, in January 1850, however, the subtitle is changed back to *Et Maanedsskrift til Befordring af sand Dannelse* (A monthly for promotion of true education), again leaving out any reference to the missionary cause. Still, the magazine keeps a certain emphasis on missionary work in its contents.

Given the fact that *For Ungdommen* did not underline its missionary aspects until, and only in, 1849, Johnsen's *Missionsblad for Børn* is probably Norway's very first missionary magazine for children. The magazine was issued monthly in 1847 and 1848, and in 1849 under the title of *Missionsblad for Ungdommen* (Missionary Magazine for the Youth).³⁶ Like *For Ungdommen*, it was printed in Stavanger and appeared as twelve-page leaflets in the duodecimo format, featuring usually one or two woodcuts in each issue. The preface to the trial issue of January 1847, which unfortunately has been cut mid-sentence due to the joint binding of several issues, presents *Missionsblad for Børn* as a translation of the German *Missionsblatt für Kinder* (1842–1918) by Christian Gottlob Barth (1799–1862), who was a prominent figure in the hugely successful evangelical press and missionary society in the southern region of Württemberg.³⁷ Comparing the issues of *Missionsblad for Børn* from January to July 1847 to the German issues from January to July 1842, it becomes clear that texts and illustrations in the Norwegian magazine have all been taken and translated from the German publication. In this way, the first Norwegian missionary children's magazine, like so

³⁵ Aukrust, *Menighetsblad og andre religiøse og kirkelige tidsskrifter i Norge*, p. 14; Økland, 'Norske barneblad', p. 99.

³⁶ H. L. Tveterås, *Norske tidsskrifter. Bibliografi over periodiske skrifter i Norge inntil 1920* (Oslo, 1940), p. 91. Unfortunately, the holdings of *Missionsblad for Børn* at the National Library of Norway, the University of Oslo Library and NTNU University Library are incomplete and consist only of the issues from January to July 1847 (bound together) and from February to March 1848 (single issues). I have not been able to locate any copies of *Missionsblad for Ungdommen*.

³⁷ N. Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism 1700–1918*, in H. and O. Chadwick (eds), *Oxford History of the Christian Church* (Oxford, 1995).

many other early publications for children in Norway, is not Norwegian at all in the sense that there is no original material here, only translated texts and imported illustrations.³⁸ However, the German publication also seems to have foreign models: in his introduction rendered in the translation, Barth writes about how he in the making of the magazine was presented with examples from England, ‘where specific missionary magazines for children are issued, and where there are even missionary associations consisting only of children.’³⁹ As such, *Missionsblad for Børn* illustrates the transnational contexts for early printed children’s literature in general and its exchanges across linguistic and cultural borders.

DYING CHILDREN, THE MISSIONARY CAUSE AND CIRCULATING TEXTS

Missionsblad for Børn features various types of texts, ranging from songs and letters to brief biographies such as the eulogy of David Brainerd who missioned in North America and, not least, stories from missionary stations around the world. All are edifying and relate to missionary life and work, and several are, to use Billington’s words, ‘morbidly pious.’⁴⁰ In this, they are representative of the many texts about dead and dying children in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century children’s literature. As Merethe Roos has pointed out in her discussion of dead and dying children in one of the first Dano-Norwegian children’s periodicals, these texts take on various forms, appearing as ‘stories from the sick bed, death notices, obituaries, or didactic texts aimed at children.’⁴¹ What they have in common is that they depict idealised deaths, where the dying child is noble and at peace with God, honourable and strong until the very end.

Several of the stories in *Missionsblad for Børn*, however, are morbid in ways that do not so much idealise children’s deaths and prepare them for their heavenly journey as insist on the importance of and need for missionary work. In one story the little Indian boy Orta tells ‘with his own words’ of how his father and oldest brother disappear during a storm, never to be seen again, whereas his mother and his baby brother soon after are

³⁸ See J. S. Kaasa, “Saavel fra fjerne Lande som fra vort eget Hjem”, pp. 310–29.

³⁹ ‘Man har anført mig Englands Exempler, hvor der ogsaa udkommer særskilte Missionsblade for Børn, og hvor der endog gives Missionsforeninger, der bestaa blot af Børn’ (*Missionsblad for Børn*, January 1847, p. 3).

⁴⁰ Billington, ‘The Religious Periodical and Newspaper Press, 1770–1870’, p. 121.

⁴¹ M. Roos, ‘Children, Dying, and Death: Views from an Eighteenth-Century Periodical for Children’, in R. Aasgaard *et al.* (eds), *Nordic Childhoods 1700–1960: From Folk Beliefs to Pippi Longstocking* (New York, London, 2018), pp. 241–53, at p. 242.

snatched and eaten by a tiger.⁴² Orta and his elder brother survive and are sent to a children's home, but the brother dies three months later and leaves Orta as the only surviving member of the family. It is a story about suffering, but with a hopeful message, ending with a reflection on Orta's joy over living with the missionaries, but also on how he at times is struck by sadness over the fact that his family never got to know Christ.

The text entitled 'Børnene i Hedningeland' (The Children in the Heathen Lands) narrates the deaths of numerous children, giving detailed and gruesome descriptions of a child having been buried alive, of the killing of female babies and of a Rajah's beheading of his 11-year-old daughter, of child offerings and cholera and of the rescue of an eight-day-old infant who had been abandoned by his 'unnatural mother.'⁴³ The piece paints a sinister and morbid picture of the lives of the heathen children, underlining the importance of and need for the missionaries' work, not least emphasised by the fact that the surviving children are raised by missionary families or in children's homes run by the local missions. The text 'Den døende Hottentotdreng' (The Dying Hottentot Boy), too, is representative of the deathbed story but has been adapted to a missionary setting. It tells of ten-year-old Frederik Roode in Pacaltsdorp in what is now South Africa. Realising that he will not recover from an inflammatory infection, the boy summons Mr Anderson of the London Missionary Society, who is stationed in Pacaltsdorp, to bid him farewell before he dies blissfully.

The Frederik Roode story furthermore exemplifies how materials in early printed children's literature in general and in this magazine in particular circulated through import and translation. Not surprisingly, the story as it appears in *Missionsblad for Børn* seems to be a direct translation from 'Der sterbende Hottentottenknabe' in Barth's *Missionsblatt für Kinder* of February 1842. Looking at the English missionary children's magazines, which Barth mentions explicitly as models, the story seems to have been first published in the British *Missionary Magazine* in September 1836 under the title 'The Dying Hottentot Boy',⁴⁴ Likewise, the accompanying woodcut with the scene where Frederik lays his head on Mr Anderson's knee first appears in the *Missionary Magazine*, then in *Missionsblatt für Kinder*, and finally in *Missionsblad for Børn*.

Whereas the texts in this publication are generally translated more or less verbatim from the German, the text on Greenlandic children has been

⁴² 'med hans egne Ord': (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1847, p. 23).

⁴³ 'unaturlige Moder' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, July 1847, p. 79).

⁴⁴ It appears in the Ohio-based *Gambier Observer* on 16 November 1836 and in the London-based *The Missionary Register* in February 1837, with minor variations and entitled 'Frederick Roode, A Hottentot Youth'.

adapted so that it relates the narrated events to Norwegian children and to missionary work in Norway, and in Stavanger specifically. After a letter written by Josva in Lichtenau (today's Alluitsoq) to a group of German children, editor Johnsen inserts a note on how children in Stavanger have also sent gifts and letters to the children of Greenland and how they too have received letters of thanks in return. *Missionsblad for Børn* renders one of these letters, written by 13-year-old Christian on behalf of the children in Nyhernhut (New Herrnhut, today's Nuuk) to '[y]ou, who live over there in Europe and have written to us, you, who are in the land called Norway, we here answer your writing and greet you all'.⁴⁵ In this way, Johnsen brings the translated piece about Greenland closer to home; to the children in Stavanger and to Norwegian readers at the same time as he promotes the work in Norwegian foreign missions. This is, however, the only example of such adaptation and domestication in *Missionsblad for Børn*.

FROM CHILD TO CHILD: LETTERS FROM THE MISSIONS

Missionsblad for Børn portrays children as central characters in the various texts but also stages children as active voices by letting the children themselves narrate their experiences, often in the form of letters. In the aforementioned Fredrik Roode story, for example, the missionary framing of the death bed scene asserts itself at the narrative level from the very beginning and introduces the daughter of a missionary as the narrator: 'This time I first let a child relate. It is the daughter of missionary Anderson in Pacaltsdorp in South Africa, who in a letter describes the event here depicted. She writes thus:'.⁴⁶ In the letter, Anderson's daughter tells of how the boy called for her father – "Frederik," said my father, "why have you sent for me?" – and later his school-fellows, sisters and parents, urging them, to lead lives

⁴⁵ 'I, som bo derover i Europa og have skrevet os til, I, som ere i det Land, som kaldes Norge, vi besvare herved eders Skrivelse og hilse eder alle': ('Børnene i Grønland'; *Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 32). The letter is dated 7 April 1845.

⁴⁶ 'Denne gang lader jeg først et Barn fortælle. Det er Datter af Missionær Anderson i Pacaltsdorp i Sydafrika, hvilken i et Brev skildrer det Optrin, som her er afbildet. Hun skriver saaledes:' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1847, p. 15). This sentence is almost verbatim to the German text. In the earlier English versions, however, this is not the first sentence in the text, nor is it identical: 'The following incident, communicated by one of Mr. Anderson's daughters, will be regarded with peculiar feelings by the friends of missions' (*The Missionary Magazine*, 1836, p. 419; *The Gambier Observer*, 16 November 1836); 'One of the daughters of Mr. Anderson, of the London Missionary Society, communicates the following particulars of the death of this particular Youth, at Pacaltsdorp' (*The Missionary Register*, February 1837, p. 105).

without sin and to seek the Lord while you are healthy and wholesome.⁴⁷ She then goes on to depict Frederik Roode's final moment: 'These were his last words, he died without great death struggle. The patience and composure, with which he bore his painful affliction, both surprised and edified those around him, and they have thus learnt something, which I hope, they will not easily forget.'⁴⁸

The letters from the Greenlandic children, too, are examples of how communication between children is made manifest in the magazine. Moreover, they give a glimpse into the lives of the children and how they have been affected by the missionaries: expressing gratitude for the gifts they have been sent and for having been introduced to Christ, they also hint to the difficulties of combining traditional ways of life with new beliefs. In good weather, Josva writes, he often has to go seal hunting instead of attending school. This, he relates, is slowing down his way towards the ideals he is presented with by the missionaries:

[W]e found a lot of pleasure in writing, and wanted to do this, to learn and in following the word of the Saviour always be more like the youth in the East (Europe). We often hear how hard-working the children of the East are in this. We too wanted to be like them and always be prepared to praise the Lord and to thank him.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ "Frederik," sagde min Fader, "hvorfors har du sendt Bud efter mig?"; 'søger Herren medens I ere friske og sunde!' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1847, pp. 15, 17).

⁴⁸ 'Dette var hans sidste Ord, han døde uden stor Dødskamp. Den Taalmodighed og Fatning, hvormed han bar sin smertelige Sygdom, var for de Omkringstaaende ligesaa forunderlig som opbyggelig, og de have derved lært noget, som de, hvilket jeg haaber, ikke saa let ville glemme' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1847, p. 17). In *The Missionary Magazine* (1836, p. 420): 'He died without a struggle. The patience and composure, with which he bore the painful affliction allotted to him, at once surprised and edified those who witnessed it; and afforded to them a lesson, which, it is to be hoped, will not be lost.'

⁴⁹ ': thi vi fandt megen Fornøielse i at Skrive, og hadde Lyst dertil, for at lære det, og ogsaa heri, og i at følge Frelserens Bud stedse blive Ungdommen i Østen (i Europa) mere lige. Vi høre oftere, hvor flittige Børnene i Østen heri ere: ogsaa vi ønskede at ligne dem, og stedse være beredte til at prise Frelseren og at takke Ham' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 31). Christian, in his letter, is less concerned with Christ and more detailed in his descriptions of Greenlandic daily life, writing about how they are often out in their kayaks in dangerous waters when they train to use their weapons. Like Josva, though, he too notes the challenges of combining a nomadic life with schooling. The text concludes with two sentences in Greenlandic in Latin letters, so that the readers may have an 'understanding of the Greenlandic language, whose words are as long as a prayer' ('et Begreb om det grønlandske Sprog, der har saa lange Ord som en Bønnestål' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 33).

There are also several other examples of children's letters in *Missionsblad for Børn*, such as 'To Breve fra Hedningebørn' (Two Letters from Heathen Children). Again, the communication is between Christian and heathen children, this time between children in England and South Africa. The first letter is written by the children at a school in Bersaba in today's South Africa, thanking the children in England for the clothing and gifts they have sent. The letter ends with a request for more: 'We are happy on Sundays, because then we wear the small dresses you have sent us: we are so many and therefore not all could have a dress, and those who did not get one, cried. ... Would you not send us some more pieces of clothing?'⁵⁰

The second letter is from Amy, 'a small girl of about nine years; my father was a slave, but there are no more slaves now'.⁵¹ In her brief note she gives thanks for the aprons, working skirts and thimbles they have received and goes on, like the writers of the previous letter, to describe the Sundays: 'On Sundays, the small children come to the missionary's house; they are clean and in their nice dresses, they are quietly seated. When the horn blows, they go to church; they sing Heir kniel ik vol van droefheid; but that you cannot understand.'⁵² In all these letters the communication is staged as being directly from child to child. Thus, the children are cast as readers and writers, which to a certain degree promotes their agency, even though it is located within the framework of the power imbalance between adults and children that characterises children's literature as such.⁵³

The letter is indeed a familiar genre in early printed children's literature (as it is in eighteenth-century literature generally), and scholars have shown how for example eighteenth-century Dano-Norwegian children's magazines stage children, and girls in particular, as letter writers.⁵⁴ Even though

⁵⁰ 'Vi ere glade om Søndagen, thi da have vi de smaa Kjoler paa, som I have sendt os: vi ere så mange og derfor kunne ikke alle faa en Kjole, og de, som ingen faa, græde da. ... Vilde I ikke sende os endnu nogle Klædningsstykker?' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 11).

⁵¹ 'Jeg er Amy, an liden Pige paa omtrent ni Aar; min Fader var en Slave, men der gives nu ingen Slaver mere' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 11).

⁵² 'Om Søndagen komme de smaa Børn i Missionærens hus; de ere renlige, de trække fine kjoler paa, de sætte sig rolige ned. Naar der bliver blæst i Hornet, drage de til Kirken; de synge Heir kniel ik vol van droefheid*; med det forstaa I ikke': (*Missionsblad for Børn*, March 1847, p. 12). In a note the editor translates the song title to 'Here I kneel full of affliction' ('Her knæler jeg fuld af Bedrøvelse').

⁵³ See M. Nikolajeva, *Power, Voice and Subjectivity in Literature for Young Readers* (New York, London, 2010).

⁵⁴ H. Bache-Wiig, 'Avis for Børn (1779–1782): Lesestykker om "Ungdommens Tilbøielighed til Dyden eller Lasten" – et monotont repertoar?', in E. Tjønneland (ed.), *Kritikk for 1814. 1700-tallets politiske og litterære offentlighet* (Oslo, 2014); N. Christensen, 'Lust for Reading and Thirst for Knowledge: Fictive Letters in a Danish

these letters were most probably fictional, they convey an understanding of the child as an independent and reflective individual in possession of humour and irony.⁵⁵ Moreover, eighteenth-century children's magazines in Denmark–Norway and Sweden, for instance, staged children as readers and consumers, signalling their increasingly important role in print culture.⁵⁶ Surely, these roles are somewhat different in the missionary magazines discussed in this chapter. Yet the children are staged as active participants in the missionary endeavour as well as in the magazine through the letters ascribed to them.

There is no way to prove these letters' authenticity and that they were actually written by the children in question, although it is not unlikely. For instance, William Anderson was indeed a missionary in Pacaltsdorp and he did indeed have daughters, and there were German and Norwegian missionary stations in Greenland at the time the letters by Josva and Christian were supposedly written.⁵⁷ Regardless of their potential factuality or fictionality, we should approach these letters as *mediated* letters that were shaped by the missionary contexts from and in which they were written and published. More important than the question of their authenticity is the fact that the letters are *presented* as being written by children. Although the letters to different degrees have been shaped by adult actors, they seem to want to give the impression of a more or less direct relation between the child writer and the child reader. The presence of adult actors, be they missionaries or magazine editors, remains secondary here, leaving room for the children's voices. In this way, the magazine represents the children in what appears to be their own words, staging them as letter writers and readers, albeit within the context of the missionary cause.

LITERARY CITIZENS?

'The great demands of Eternity on your hearts must not be forgotten in favour of the many demands that education of life in the world puts into force, the purpose of being a heavenly citizen not being set back by the call

Children's Magazine of 1770', *The Lion and the Unicorn*, 2 (2009); N. Christensen, *Videbegær*.

⁵⁵ N. Christensen, *Videbegær*, p. 180.

⁵⁶ See J. S. Kaasa, 'Hvordan bli en tidsskriftleser? Medieoppdragelse i 1700-tallets barnemagasiner', *Arr – Idéhistorisk tidsskrift*, 31:4 (2019), 21–31; J. S. Kaasa, 'Å gi sin daler med glede: Barn som forbrukere i *Ungdommens Ven* (1770)', *Barnboken*, 42 (2019), 1–18.

⁵⁷ For more background on these missions, see for example C. Larsen *et al.*, *Da skolen tog form. 1780–1850* (Aarhus, 2013), pp. 279–89.

of the world citizen; is the message in *For Ungdommen*.⁵⁸ The passage casts the child as both world and heavenly citizen, with a light warning against letting the first take precedence over the latter. Rather, world citizenship seems to mainly serve the function of preparing the child – as a Christian citizen in training – for his or her heavenly citizenship. An important part of this world citizenship, it seems, is the role of the child in missionary work, and we find in these magazines the staging of the child as a future missionary, or at least that of an active participant in religious life.

Missionsblad for Børn is quite explicit in this regard, such as in the self-reproachful text entitled 'Hjælp dog de arme Hedninger!' (Help the Poor Heathens!): 'Every day fifty to sixty thousand unconverted heathens die. And it is our fault! Had we brought them the Gospel, they there would have found light and support, and could have wandered on the road of salvation.'⁵⁹ The text goes on to present various ways in which the child reader may support the missionary cause, ranging from prayer – 'If it be so, that they could not do anything but pray for the missionaries and their work, this is still indeed the most important one can do for them'⁶⁰ – to donations: 'But children could also do more, if they wanted to, you have perhaps a money box from where you could take a small trifle for the missionary cause and place it in the missionary box.'⁶¹ In this way, the text encourages the child to be an active participant in missionary work in various ways, to be like the boy who prays to God to make him a missionary or, at the very least, to ask: 'What can I do for the poor Heathens?'⁶² The child saviour motif, which we usually think of in terms of Romantic symbolism,⁶³ here takes on a much more pragmatic role as future helpers in the lands of the

⁵⁸ 'Det store krav, som Evigheden gjør paa eders Hjerte, maa ikke forglemmes over de mange Fordringer, som Dannelsen for Livet i Verden gjør gjældende, Bestemmelsen til Himmelsborger ikke sættes tilbage for Verdensborgerens Kald' (*For Ungdommen*, July 1846, p. 8).

⁵⁹ 'Enhver Dag dør femti til sextitusinde uomvendte Hedninger. Og det er vor Skyld! Havde vi bragt dem Evangelium, saa haavde de deri fundet Lys og Støtte, og havde kunnet vandre paa Salighedens Veie' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1848, p. 14).

⁶⁰ 'Sæt endog, at de ikke kunne andet end bede for Missionærerne og deres Arbeide, saa er dog dette netop det Vigtigste, som man kan gjøre for dem' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1848, pp. 15–16).

⁶¹ 'Men Børn kunne ogsaa gjøre noget Mere, hvis de ville, De have maaske en Sparebøsse, hvoraf de kunne tage en liden Skjærv for Missionssagen og lægge den i Missionskassen' (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1848, p. 16).

⁶² 'Hva kan da jeg gjøre for de arme Hedninger?': (*Missionsblad for Børn*, February 1848, p. 17).

⁶³ A. Byrnes, 'The Child Saviour: A Literary Motif', in *The Child: An Archetypal Symbol in Literature for Children and Adults* (New York, 1995), pp. 7–32. See also R. C. Kuhn, *Corruption in Paradise: The Child in Western Literature* (London, 1982).

heathens. In all of these examples the child's agency, which also involves responsibility and blame, is tightly connected to the missionary cause and seems to answer to the words from the Acts of the Apostles that reverberate throughout these magazines, calling for the child reader to come over and help.

The idea of children as future citizens and as active participants in society is certainly in tune with Lutheran notions of the child. In the missionary magazines I have studied in this chapter this citizenship and participation relates first and foremost to religious life and missionary work but also makes itself manifest in the children's ascribed roles as (letter) readers and writers. As such, the notion of the child as a *Christian* citizen in training seems to be intertwined with another training, namely that of a *literary* citizen in training, preparing the child to become a participant in print culture, which through the import of foreign materials and the international geography of the missionary work is also fundamentally transnational. Literary citizenship in these first missionary magazines, then, although concentrating on the missionary cause, encompasses at least the possibility of a range of different citizenships and roles for the child: as world citizen, heavenly citizen, and literary citizen.