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THE CRITICALITY OF CRITICISM: VISIONS OF "LITERATURE" IN MEIJI JAPAN

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THE CRITICALITY OF CRITICISM:
VISIONS OF "LITERATURE" IN MEIJI JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

Criticism in Japan's Meiji period (1868–1912) envisioned literature yet to come. In its envisioning, criticism prompted periodization ("modern"), nationalization ("Japanese"), categorization ("literature"), and perceptual standardization ("aesthetic object") of a diverse range of writings from Chinese classics to prose fiction. In this dissertation, I pay particular attention to debates—a crucial site of criticism—of the late 1880s and early 1890s that revolved around literature's boundaries, and investigate how criticism paved the way for modern Japanese literature. The processes and outcomes of criticism's endeavors are the story of this work.

Contrary to the assumption that criticism arises in response to literature, criticism in late nineteenth-century Japan arrived prior to literature by offering visions of a modern national literature. This apparently inverted order was tightly connected to the colonial context in which Japan found itself in the late nineteenth century, where having a national literature was considered as a marker of modernization. During this time, debates, typically formed as exchanges of written essays through print media among intellectuals, operated to strip off multiple potential futures of literature. In so doing, these debates facilitated a homogenized vision of literature as a national, aesthetic object that could serve as a modern, independent form of knowledge.

Criticism claimed a role of primacy in shaping the onset of a modern national literature, while demanding for itself to be an objective evaluator of literature from a distance. In time, however, practiced criticism betrayed its premise. Many debates, in their attempts to delineate literature's boundaries and their own placement outside of those, disclosed how such a distance could not be withheld. However, in this very inability to

maintain the border between literature and itself, criticism began to exercise its criticality. Precisely in failing to fulfill its ostensible premise, the language of criticism mobilized in debates invited rhetoric that was unfit to the time and space within which it was inserted. This dissertation argues that criticism's failure prompted moments of discordance with contemporary discourses on Japan's modernization, and thereby generated a critique against what historically conditioned the emergence of such criticism itself.

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NOTES ON JAPANESE NAMES AND TRANSLATIONS

This dissertation generally follows the Japanese convention; Japanese names are written family names first, followed by given names. Most likely I refer to Japanese intellectuals and writers by their commonly used pen names, either by their pseudo given names ("Ningetsu" for Ishibashi Tomokichi, a.k.a., "Ishibashi Ningetsu") or by their pseudo family names ("Futabatei" for Hasegawa Tatsunosuke, a.k.a., "Futabatei Shimei").

Mori Ōgai/Rintarō and Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō are two exceptions. I choose to refer to the former Mori in this dissertation because I wish to preserve the heterogeneity inherent in his writings. Some of the former scholarship assigned "Mori Ōgai" to a literary figure and "Mori Rintarō" to a medical doctor. Yet to repeat that tradition is to reductively erase the possibilities of middle grounds that inarguably lie between these two names. This will be further elaborated in Chapter Three. Similarly, I refer to Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō "Tsubouchi" as opposed to the convention of calling him "Shōyō." Tsubouchi's writings, produced under different pen names, often refuse to be categorized or stratified in order. As such, his writing career cannot be generalized as that of literature scholar "Tsubouchi Yūzō" on the one hand and that of fiction writer "Tsubouchi Shōyō" on the other. Chapter Five touches on how some of Tsubouchi's writings refuse to be categorized. This is not to say that other figures such as Ningetsu and Futabatei and their writings did not entail comparable irreducibility. Yet, given the frequency and significance of the writing practices of Mori and Tsubouchi I detail in this dissertation, I treat these two figures separately.

For publications made in English, both originally and in translation, I follow the order that appeared in each work. All translations cited in here are my own, unless otherwise noted.

INTRODUCTION

Overview of Study

Criticism in Japan's Meiji period (1868–1912) envisioned literature yet to come. In criticism's envisaging of literature, a certain type of writing became periodized as "modern," nationalized as "Japanese," categorized as "literature," and as a whole posited as an "aesthetic" object, separately from a diverse range of writings from Chinese classics to prose fiction. I pay particular attention to debates—a significant, yet little recognized site of criticism—of the late 1880s and early 1890s that revolved around literature's boundaries and investigate how criticism paved the way for modern Japanese literature. The processes and outcomes of criticism's endeavors are the story of this work.

Criticism foresaw literature yet to exist. Multiple and competing conceptions of literature coexisted in late nineteenth-century Japan, any one of which could ultimately turn into literature. Many theoretical discussions about what "literature" ought to be thus took place. Throughout those discussions, various visions of literature were proposed, examined, and contested by contemporary intellectuals. Offering potential visions of literature to be, criticism prompted periodization, nationalization, categorization, and perceptual standardization of varied forms of writings. Criticism then gradually singled out a particular type of writing independently of others and named it "modern Japanese literature." Debates, typically formed as exchanges of written essays through print media among intellectuals, operated to strip off other potential futures of literature literally one discussion after another. Through the debating processes thereof, criticism facilitated a homogenized vision of literature as a national, aesthetic object that could serve as a modern, independent form of knowledge.

Criticism preceded literature, contrary to the assumption that it arises in response to works of literature. To be precise, this does not mean that literature did not exist before this time, as my argument concerns how criticism in the form of intellectual debates prepared and made uniform a particular vision of literature. To frame more concretely the thesis on the inverted order between criticism and literature, let us remember how major writers from this time period started their writing careers:

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō: the conception of *Shōsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885–1886) before *Tōsei shosei katagi* (*The Character of Modern Students*, 1885–1886)
- Futabatei Shimei: "Shōsetsu sōron" ("The General Theory of the Novel," 1886) before *Ukigumo* (*The Drifting Cloud*, 1887–1889)
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō: "Shōsetsuron" ("The Theory of the Novel," 1889) before "Maihime" ("The Dancing Girl," 1890)
- Natsume Sōseki: the conception of *Theory of Literature* (around 1900) before *Wagahai wa neko de aru* (*I Am a Cat*, 1905–1906)

These intellectuals began their writing careers with criticism by theoretically engaging with the concept of literature. That they have been canonized as the "founders" of modern Japanese literature over the course of time in scholarly narratives is essential to an understanding of the primacy given to criticism at the embryonic stage of modern Japanese literature.¹ These intellectual's ardent endeavors offered multiple visions of literature that were not necessarily compatible with each other. The apparent inversion of criticism and literature had much to do with this multiplicity of what literature could have stood for and

1. Translation played an important role in the formation of modern Japanese literature as well. The writers discussed here were well-versed in Euro-American writings, and they often experimented and created new writing styles in Japanese through the practice of their translation. For more information on the significant part that translation had in Meiji Japan's writing styles, see Indra Levy's scholarship. Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore: Westernesque Women and Translation in Modern Japanese Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

developed into. More importantly, this inversion was tightly connected to the historical, colonial context in which Japan found itself in the late nineteenth century.²

While homogenizing the concept of literature, criticism placed itself on a privileged level over literature. Claiming the necessity for the rise of literature in contemporary Japan, criticism represented itself as a primary actor charged with guiding and nurturing literature from without, maintaining an objective distance from the object that it criticizes. What accompanied the urgent call of criticism that fosters literature was the call of criticism's standards that enable objective evaluations of literature's boundaries. Naturally, discussions on criticism's own boundaries came to surface during this fertile and nascent period. What is criticism? What does it do? How should it function? Who is entitled to be a critic? Where should it stand vis-à-vis what it criticizes? Philosopher Ōnishi Hajime's early attempt to theorize the primacy of criticism in 1888, critic Ishibashi Ningetsu's enthusiastic production of evaluative essays in 1888–1889, and the sectionalization of "criticism" as an independent column in intellectual journals in the late 1880s all exemplify the premise of criticism's inevitable meta-language-ness, i.e., how the language of criticism transcends what it is criticizing. To meditate upon this claimed distance between criticism and literature is one of the primary goals of this dissertation. To wit, how was criticism put into practice while simultaneously maintaining its presumed objectivity in late nineteenth-century Japan, and in what moment did practiced criticism begin to serve its critical function?

My analyses demonstrate that criticism, supposedly standing on the meta-level of literature, nonetheless failed to keep its promise. While criticism posited in theory was

2. Komori Yōichi initially inspired me to delve into the inversive relationship between criticism and literature conceived in Meiji Japan. Komori, "Kindai hihyō no shuppatsu" ("The Departure of Modern Criticism"), *Hihyō kūkan* (*Critical Space*) 1 (1999): 69–84.

claimed to maintain an objective distance from its object, the criticism practiced betrayed its premise and became indistinguishable from what it was evaluating. Multiple vehement debates attempting to delineate literature's as well as criticism's boundaries disclosed how such a distance could not be upheld, as the language mobilized in discussions ended up collapsing the border presumed between criticism and literature. Criticism thus broke its word. Yet it is in this very failure, I argue, that criticism became critical. Precisely in failing to fulfill its ostensible premise of meta-language-ness, criticism summoned words and rhetoric that were not supposed to fit the historical moment in which it was inserted, clashed with contemporary discourses on Japan's modernization, and thereby enacted a critique against what historically conditioned the emergence of such criticism itself.

How the rise of modern nations coincides with, if not requires the establishment of national literature has been scrutinized by various scholars already.³ To summarize such studies at the risk of oversimplification: National literature serves as a repository of imagined national unity, producing nationals and by extension a place called nation where the existence of those nationals become naturalized. By focusing on a specific location at a particular historical moment in the context of late nineteenth-century Japan, I wish to add some of my observations to the much-discussed connection between nation and literature. This project then suggests that if literature's connection to the national is considered a priori, that "a priori" is a historically marked one. My approach, however, does not simply examine the mutual reinforcement of modern nation and national literature. Instead, I aim at contemplating the question regarding the emergence of a modern national literature, not through analyzing works of literature that nourished and homogenized national sentiment,

3. We can remember Benedict Anderson's contribution as an exemplary case. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

but through looking into often under-discussed criticism that enabled works of literature to serve as a repository of the national.

Criticism's Criticality

Etymological studies of Japanese term "criticism" (*hihyō*) are scarce in both Japanese and English scholarship. The Japanese term *hihyō* emerged and developed as one of the compound words of the character *hyō* (review, comment, evaluation). Other derivatives of *hyō* include such words as *hyōron* (evaluative discussions), *jihyō* (commentary on current affairs), *shohyō* (commentary on writings). *Hihyō* as a term began to be in frequent use in intellectual discourses in the middle of the 1870s and gained wider currency as a Japanese equivalent of "criticism" in English, roughly around the end of the 1880s.⁴ Yet, this does not mean that evaluative activities did not exist before this time. The practice of evaluation, assessment, and interpretation of given objects, especially written materials, was surely conducted before the late nineteenth century. *Hyōban* or *hyōbanki* (reputations or writings of reputations), for instance, were already an established genre of writing in the late Edo period (1603–1867).

In this dissertation, I use the term criticism broadly in the sense of verbal attempts to examine, delineate, and intervene in boundaries or functions of certain practices. My analyses mostly concentrate on theoretical discussions that revolved around the practice of writing literature. In some occasions, though, I talk about criticism in general as (negative) evaluation of objects/phenomena that are not limited to the writing of literature. My rendition of dual meaning to the word: so-called literary criticism on the one hand, and a

4. Kimura Naoe, "Hihyō no tanjō: Meiji chūki ni okeru 'hihyō,' 'kairyō,' 'shakai'" ("The Birth of Criticism"), *Hikaku bungaku (Comparative Literature)* 45 (2002): 8–9.

critique at large on the other—may potentially cause confusion. Nonetheless, I still run that risk, precisely because the usage of criticism/*hihyō* at the historical moment of late nineteenth-century Japan itself involved such intricacy. In fact, I may even go further to argue that the intricacy entailed in this term is its extraordinary strength, allowing it to serve as a conduit for diverse possibilities of intervention that verbal, writing practices held in Meiji Japan. Throughout my writing, I intend to qualify my usage of the term when necessary and wish to minimize the room of uncertainty.

Given that the term *hihyō* came to be in frequent use as a corresponding Japanese term to English "criticism" under the chaotic linguistic climate of late nineteenth-century Japan,⁵ it would be profitable to bear in mind the etymological kinship between "criticism" and "crisis."⁶ Both terms derived from the Greek word *krinō* that connotes "division," "decision," or "judgment."⁷ Remembering criticism's affinity with crisis may well illuminate Meiji Japan, where radical transformations were under way on multiple fronts. That is, if late nineteenth-century Japan was experiencing a diverse range of crises (political, geopolitical, economic, social, cultural, technological, existential, among others) and thereby facing a decisive, divisive juncture, criticism widely practiced at that time should serve as a resourceful locus to reflect upon the decisiveness, the divisiveness of that time. Moreover, as much as crisis invites criticism, it is also possible to say that crisis emerges as such by being verbally named so through criticism. The task here is to elucidate what sorts

5. Saitō Mareshi and David Lurie offer profound analyses of the state of languages in late nineteenth-century Japan. Saitō, *Kanbunmyaku to kindai Nihon: mō hitotsu no kotoba no sekai (The Sinographic Sphere and Modernity)* (Tokyo: NHK Bukkusu, 2007). Lurie, *Realms of Literacy: Early Japan and the History of Writing* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

6. I have Dr. Shigehisa Kuriyama from Harvard University to thank for inviting me into thinking about the etymology of these two terms.

7. Reinhart Koselleck, "Crisis," trans. Michaela Richter, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 2 (April 2006): 358–359.

of discursive attempts were made to register, hence in a sense helped give rise to crises, and how those attempts in turn facilitated the reshaping of the conceptual order along with which to register the very crises.

I owe much of my thinking of the affinity between criticism and crisis to Paul de Man's seminal essay "Criticism and Crisis." I am taking his words seriously and as "literally" as possible, when he says, "the notion of crisis and that of criticism are very closely linked, so much so that one could state that all true criticism occurs in the mode of crisis."⁸ On the personal level, it is fair to say that this dissertation project exhibits my infinite longing to contemplate inexhaustible implications of de Man's words. Above all, one question has lingered in my mind: Why does de Man qualify certain criticism as "true," postulating and alleging that there is a true-untrue division in the practice of criticism? This is particularly puzzling, because he extensively discusses throughout this essay the process of mystification/demystification/self-mystification that criticism both consciously and inadvertently sets in motion. Does claiming something "true" not fall into danger of mystification of some sort? Why does de Man put his own claim in danger by allowing a room for a potentially mystifying effect to emerge?

I consider de Man's move as an open invitation for a project that requires the uncovering of when criticism brings its criticality into play. Immediately before his mentioning of "true criticism," de Man is asking: "Is criticism indeed engaged in scrutinizing itself to the point of reflecting on its own origin? Is it asking whether it is necessary for the act of criticism to take place?"⁹ If de Man is suggesting by these questions

8. De Man, "Criticism and Crisis," in *Blindness and Insight: Essays in the Rhetoric of Contemporary Criticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 8. I thank my colleague at Princeton University Ron Wilson to lead me to this insightful essay.

9. Ibid., 8.

criticism's ultimate necessity for self-reflexivity and for un-inviting of mystification, then we can start thinking that what he calls "true criticism" that "occurs in the mode of crisis" could be pointing to criticism that pushes itself on the verge of collapse. In other words, if what de Man pursues as criticism cannot help but come back to itself, erode its own ground, and put its own origin into crisis, criticism must exercise its critical force precisely when it falters in living up to what it is originally insisting.

Criticism comes to serve a critical function in its own crisis. Such reading of de Man helped me reflect on intellectual discursive spaces that were taking shape through print media in late nineteenth-century Japan. When a certain word, argument, essay, or discussion in criticism falls in conflict with what it is asserting itself, we can choose to tarry in that oddity, instead of dismissing it as a misfit or mishap. To trace the process through which criticism topples and fails is thus to open up possibilities for us to unveil moments at which criticism becomes critical. The entwined relationship between criticism and crisis can be observed throughout numerous debates, a crucial site of criticism—not only on literature's boundaries, but more broadly on political, economic, social, cultural, and technological issues—that proceeded one after another at this time in Japan. This dissertation tries to catch sight of *criticism in crisis* by analyzing several debates that unfolded around the topic of literature.

Context: Why Late Nineteenth-Century Japan?

Let me contextualize late nineteenth-century Japan to underline why my project pays attention to this time and place as its focus of investigation. The latter half of the nineteenth century was a time when Japan was undergoing drastic transformations on political, social, technological fronts. A major political shift commonly referred to as the

Meiji Restoration was undertaken since the late 1860s, as the country transitioned from the feudal shogunate (the Edo/Tokugawa period, 1603–1867) into the alternative imperial regime (the Meiji period, 1868–1912). In very simple terms, it was a time when Japan was transforming itself into a nation, state, and empire.

The Meiji Restoration was driven by multiple forces, both domestic and international, and yet above all the waves of Euro-American imperialism had a significant impact. Under strong imperialist pressure, Japan began to have more open diplomatic relations from the 1850s onward with dominant foreign powers, such as the U.S., Britain, France, Russia, and the Netherlands.

Japan's opening at this point in many ways determined its troubled relationships with the world. First and foremost, it started with the unequal treaties that set tariff autonomy and extraterritoriality disadvantageous to Japan and lowered Japan's diplomatic status. In addition, just beyond their borders, China was already divided and semi-colonized by countries like Britain and France since the early nineteenth century. Regardless of whether it had a choice or not, Japan did not stand on the same ground with imperial powers from the beginning, given a threat of their imperialist action. Under such circumstances, Japan had to struggle to establish itself, and represent itself as a successfully modernized nation, both on the international and domestic stage.

Japan sought to "modernize" itself, the immediate purpose of which was to revise unequal treaties that it had to conclude with Euro-American powers and to avoid being colonized. This "modernization" (*kindaika*), however, functioned synonymously with "Westernization" (*seiyōka*) in late nineteenth-century Japan. Whatever was considered "Western," be it clothing, architecture, or customs, was immediately considered "civilized" and "modern." It is not unrelated that social Darwinism, a variant of the evolution theory

that naturalizes the single progression of time and the linear evolution of human society, was received seriously and widely through works of Herbert Spencer in Meiji Japan. The reception of such a theory induced the reconceptualization and reorganization of Japan's past, present, and future in relation to the world around it. That is to say, with the grave imbalance of the military and technological strength between Japan and Euro-American imperial powers in the background, "the West" became conceived as the highest, the most evolved form of human civilization by the latecomer of "modernization" in "the Far East."

It is necessary to note that Japan's modernization project developed not only against Euro-American imperialism; it required Asia (or "the Orient" or "China") as a counterpoint against which Japan claimed its modern-ness. It may be helpful to consider this in terms of Japan's colonial dilemma: Wanting to be equal to the West but cannot fulfill its want. To reconcile this dilemma, Japan began to search for the more barbaric other over which it can claim its superiority. The target in this case was Asia. Japan, which was not yet colonized but not yet modernized either, assigned itself a middle point between "the civilized West" and "backward Asia," and, naturalized its own inevitable progression toward "civilization." Japan did this specifically by distancing itself from "backward Asia."

This is not to say that the West was actually superior and that Asia was literally barbaric, because such a hierarchical positioning of these areas was nothing but Japan's rhetorical construction. "The West" here does not necessarily point to empirical entities, but functions more as a regulative idea through which Japan imagined its position in the

world.¹⁰ Likewise, "Asia" does not necessarily correspond to an actual, geographical location.

The civilizational hierarchy drawn among the West, Japan, and Asia, was certainly not an empirical fact but imaginary, owing much of its proliferation to Japanese intellectuals' rhetorical manipulations of how to represent the triad. There are many examples of such rhetorical representations of "Japan on its way to civilization, unlike the rest of Asia" in intellectual discourses at that time. For instance, writings by Tokutomi Sohō, chief editor of then influential intellectual journal *Kokumin no tomo* (*The Nation's Friend*), vividly reflect the logic of single, linear progression of civilization. In one of his essays produced in April 1888, Sohō argues:

Present Japan is in the age of application. In my thinking, this is not the time for contemporary Japanese people to admire antiques and sooth themselves, to recklessly embark on things that go beyond their ability and get nothing done, or to just endure vainly. I just believe that this is the age when we carefully, immediately, and incessantly apply more advanced Euro-American civilization to us, so as to make our half-civilized Japan stand equal to civil European countries.

"Intellectuals" are responsible to examine Japanese people's "demands" and to "select" what needs to be "applied" to Japan. If this process succeeds, Sohō continues, "it shouldn't be difficult to make us the country of Western civilization that towers at the center of the Oriental barbarian countries."¹¹

10. That said, in some occasions "the West" did not simply function as a monolithic concept. In the case of the negation of the ideal debate that I detail in Chapter Five, intellectual Mori Ōgai/Rintarō mobilized German art theory to combat against writer Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō who idealized Shakespeare. In a sense this debate assumes a facade of a surrogate war between the newly-emerging German Empire and the already-saturated British Empire. In light of the social degeneration theory that was circulating in nineteenth-century Europe, this debate occurring in Japan in the 1890s has a rather transnational implication.

11. Sohō, "Genkon no Nihon wa tekiyō no jidai nari, hihyō no jidai nari" ("Present Japan is the Age of Application, the Age of Criticism"), *Kokumin no tomo* 20 (April 20, 1888): 10–12. In this essay, Sohō uses the term "criticism" broadly in the sense of meticulous assessment of things and phenomena.

A discourse like this indeed soothed the anxiety of Japan still in the "half-civilized" state and at the same time fueled its imagination to become equal to "the civilized West." I cannot emphasize enough that such hierarchy is a rhetorically constructed one. Yet, when I say so, I do not mean that we can underestimate it. That is to say, rhetorical and imaginary phenomena did produce effects on the empirical level. Japan's rather quick military expansion over neighboring regions in Asia offers an interesting example, in that Japan was assuming the position of "the West" and reproducing the colonial hierarchy it had with imperial powers against Asia. Remember the Sino-Japanese War that broke out in 1894 and Japan's victory in it. Japan's defeating China prompted the revising of the unequal treaties that it had with imperial powers. This event served as a symbolic junction, because the rhetoric of "leaving Asia, entering the West" (*datsua nyūō*)¹² was in many ways enacted on the empirical level.

The extent to which such geopolitical hierarchization affected the realm of knowledge should not be disregarded, no matter how imaginary that putative hierarchy was. In fact, along with the unfolding of the Meiji Restoration, the concept of what constitutes "knowledge" was pushed into massive reformation. "China" is a key here. It is obvious that China had been a primary source of Japan's intellectualism for a long time. Think about, for instance, the writing system developed in Japan; it would not have been possible without

Through the rest of this dissertation, I frequently refer to *Kokumin no tomo* as my source of information and target of investigation. This is because of the vital function that this particular medium had in the formation of intellectual discourses during Meiji Japan. I rely on Kimura Naoe's analyses of Meiji elites' discursive spaces. See Kimura, *Seinen no tanjō: Meiji Nihon ni okeru seijiteki jissen no tenkan* (*The Birth of Youth: Transformations of Political Practices in Meiji Japan*) (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha: 1998).

12. The most famous example of this rhetoric is Fukuzawa Yukichi's "Datsua ron" ("Theory of De-Asianization") written in 1885.

Chinese characters and writings. And yet, that foundation of knowledge began to falter along with the prevalence of the rhetoric of the civilizational hierarchy. Despite the significance of genealogies of Chinese-based knowledge, Japan began to negate "Chinese-ness" so as to emphasize its proximity to "Western civilization."

This reformation of knowledge, as well as the negation of "Chinese-ness," did not leave the realm of literature untouched. First, in intellectual discourses, literature began to be discussed in the rhetoric of civilization, and its connection to modern Japan came to be naturalized. The typical argument goes like this: In order for Japan to be modernized or at least to appear modernized, Japan needs its own literature. Tokutomi Sohō in *Kokumin no tomo*, for instance, establishes the connection between Japan and literature in his 1888 essay as follows:

I believe that literature truly has enormous impact on people's mind in a country. . . . This is because, I believe, literature is in fact something like the air of the intellectual, moral world. Whether this air is pure and innocent, or dirty and rotten largely influences people's mind, energy, and spirits of a country.¹³

By likening literature to the "air," Sohō underlines its existential necessity to contemporary Japan. The connection among literature, Japan, its people, and their mentality was thus becoming normalized.

Secondly, literature came to be posited as Japan's own, independent form of knowledge. For many Japanese intellectuals at the time, the term literature or *bungaku* did not just mean a body of written texts, but referred to a corpus of knowledge.¹⁴ This corpus

13. Sohō, "Bungaku sekai no genjō" ("The Present State of the World of Literature"), *Kokumin no tomo* 15 (February 3, 1888): 12–13.

14. Saitō Mareshi's scholarship on the Sinographic sphere (*kanbunmyaku*) helps to conceive the relationship between Sinographic writing and Japan. See above mentioned *Kanbunmyaku to kindai Nihon*, as well as *Kanbunmyaku no kindai: Shin matsu, Meiji no bungakken* (*Modernity of the Sinographic Sphere: The Realm*

of knowledge was based on classical Chinese texts that often thematized the rise and fall of empires and historical heroes who played an important role in it. These texts formed the basis for Japanese intellectual vocabularies, writing, and thinking. And yet, when Japanese intellectuals started reading texts originally written in English, French, German, or Russian, they were forced to negotiate with multiple, heterogeneous possibilities of literature. Does literature point to epic, romance, poetry, drama, or prose fiction? Does it need to look like historical narratives, political allegories, didactic teachings, or purely aesthetic writings? There were many competing ideas regarding what constitutes literature, and some of the ideas were met with strong opposition. Discussing literature's boundaries at that time thus required many layers of translation and transformation of different visions of literature, including those of what literature could have become but did not. The reason why numerous debates about literature's boundaries had to take place in succession at this historical moment lies here. In many ways, the process of debating involved the purification of the concept of literature, i.e., the exclusion of whatever was considered "unfit" to a modern national literature.

What was at stake in redefining literature was whether or not Japan could produce its own form of knowledge that could be endorsed as "civilized" from the perspective of "the West" as a regulative idea. The geopolitical hierarchy was certainly in operation when Meiji Japan realized the necessity to come up with its own literature that is "modern" and "Japanese." Whatever literature was going to be, it had to be defined against the sense of literature in Chinese classics, while simultaneously negotiating with other Euro-American genealogies of literature. The negation of Chinese classics posed an interesting question to

of Literature at The End of Qing and Meiji) (Nagoya: Nagoya Daigaku Shuppankai, 2005).

Japanese intellectuals on the ontological level, in that they needed to undermine the very foundation of their knowledge within themselves.¹⁵ And yet, at least on the rhetorical level, they assigned the position of "Asian backwardness" to "Chinese-ness," such as Chinese characters, rhythms, and patterns, and rejected that "Chinese-ness," in order to elevate Japan's position in the civilizational stratum. The will for self-representation—representing Japan in association with "Western civilization" and distantly from "barbaric Asia," or, being able to, having a tool to represent Japan in such a way—was in operation behind the claim for forging Japan's own literature. The discursive construction of modern Japanese literature thus needs to be situated within the colonial, geopolitical context, in relation to the triad of the West, Japan, and China/Asia.

Criticism shouldered a task to navigate the way through heterogeneous, yet still coexistent ideas of literature, so that Japan could attain its own independent form of knowledge. I just mentioned a few passages ago that Meiji intellectuals typically argued that, in order for Japan to be modernized, Japan needs its own literature. This argument was oftentimes followed by another set of plea that goes: In order for modern Japanese literature to come, Japan first needs criticism as the universal standard that can nurture and pave the way for literature.

15. It is possible to identify several discourses of the time that attempted to reconcile this dilemma. Phonocentrism that appeared in the form of the *genbun itchi* movement (the unification of the spoken and the written, the vernacularization, standardization of the written) is one good example. Such a discourse prioritized speech, based on the premise of the transparency and immediacy of speech that is linked to a particularized, nationalized body. The notion that speech is a "natural" medium that enables unmediated access to the human interior facilitated the imagining of Japan's independency ("unique Japanese sound that is from uttered from Japanese body"). Phonocentrism became particularly important, when the existing highly stylized writing system was considered "artificial" to describe "Japan's natural state," for it was "contaminated" by Chinese writings.

Here are a couple of examples. Characterizing the contemporary scene of writing as the simultaneous "declining of Oriental literature" and "prevailing of Western literature," Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō states in 1887: "Those who cherish the progress of literature and aspire for its growth must concentrate on wishing the great progress of the learning of criticism to begin with."¹⁶ One of the then-influential intellectuals Ōnishi Hajime articulates in 1888: "Literature in our country hangs its hope in the future. It is only natural that people increasingly came to feel the need of criticism at this time."¹⁷ Note the chronological order appearing in their rhetoric: For literature to arrive *in the future*, criticism is called for *at this time, to begin with*. In this way, criticism was repeatedly appointed to be a forerunner of literature in Japan. Criticism was necessitated in advance of literature, in which sense it did precede the latter.

The increasing attention to criticism and its role as a guide to literature began to take a material form in the late 1880s: Namely, compartmentalization of the criticism section in many major periodicals. Journals and papers spatially separated criticism of published works from other topics including literature. Intellectual journal dedicated for women's education *Jogaku zasshi* (*The Women's Magazine*) made "criticism" an independent column in February 1887. In August 1887, *Shuppan geppyō* (*Monthly Reviews of Publications*) was issued as Meiji Japan's first periodical that exclusively features evaluations of published items. In October 1887, *Kokumin no tomo* (*The Nation's Friend*), which was gaining an increasing number of readership among young intellectuals issue by issue since its inauguration in February of the same year, decided to separate the criticism column from

16. Tsubouchi, "Hiyō no hyōjun" ("Standards of Criticism"), *Chūō gakujutsu zasshi* (*Journal of Central [Scientific] Learning*) 58 (September 15, 1887): 1–2.

17. Ōnishi, "Hiyōron" ("Discussions on Criticism"), *Kokumin no tomo* 21 (May 4, 1888): 27.

leading articles, special contributions, readers' contributions, miscellaneous reports, contemporary news, and political/literary essays.¹⁸

While these mediums formally individualized criticism of publications, the vocation appointed for criticism was emphasized not only within the section dedicated to criticism but also from without. Tokutomi Sohō, in aforementioned essay that was included in the leading article column, determines that what enables Japan to properly "select" advanced Euro-American civilization that is to be "applied" to Japan is criticism: "the present state (of Japan) stands in need of criticism the most. It is crying out for precise, rigorous criticism."¹⁹ Ōnishi Hajime's essay quoted above also advocates the mission of criticism from the special contribution section, arguing how critics do not only need to "evaluate creative writers at the rear," but also "undertake responsibility for leading them in the front."²⁰ As such, both within and outside the space assigned to criticism in major print media, criticism was repetitively placed on the privileged level over literature.

This inverted order of criticism and literature and its link to the logic of civilizational hierarchy became strikingly articulated in a mission statement of *Shigarami zōshi*, criticism-centered journal that Mori Ōgai/Rintarō launched in late 1889. Mori first

18. This intensifying awareness to criticism indicates how the publishing world was growing at an accelerating speed and how an overflowing number of publications were being produced at this historical moment in Japan. These events were of course impossible without the wider mobilization of the technology of movable type printing in the early Meiji period, as well as the advancement of domestic transportation that dramatically reduced the time and cost for distribution.

With the overwhelming proliferation of books, papers, and journals in the background, *Shuppan geppyō* in its first issue identified its mission as an "impartial, disinterested" evaluator of the "true value" of published works.

19. Sohō, "Genkon no Nihon wa tekiyō no jidai nari, hihiyō no jidai nari," 11.

20. Ōnishi, "Hihiyōron," 25.

describes the current state of literature in contemporary Japan and provides a rationale for why Japan needs criticism more than ever in the following manner:

. . . , there is an extremely large number of foreign elements in the world of literature in Japan. . . . Multiple aesthetic factors of our own, those of China's, and those of the West's are scattered around [among different writing styles]. This chaotic state should not be endured for a long time. We are aware that the time to clear this up is nearing. What makes this chaos be cleared is nothing other than criticism.²¹

Mori declares that the journal's overarching aim is to rescue literature in Japan out of chaos by means of criticism. However, this criticism is in no way neutral. Out of any number of possible solutions, Mori chooses "poetics that Western literati established based upon aesthetics" as his primary "standards" for criticism.²² According to Mori, criticism that prepares the way for Japan's independent literature must be "Western"-rooted.²³ It is obvious that in Mori's logic the geopolitical, colonial hierarchy was seamlessly translated into intellectual stratum, naturalizing the superiority of "Western" knowledge. Mori's gesture certainly coincides with the suppression of the genealogies of preexisting form of knowledge that had been fostering Meiji intellectuals' literacy, including his own.

Criticism did precede literature in Meiji Japan. Criticism became rhetorically posited in intellectual discourses as an essential actor that fosters the proper germination of literature—literature as an independent, intellectual belonging of a modern Japan. Criticism

21. Mori, "Shigarami zōshi no honryō o ronzu" ("Discussing the Core Feature of *Shigarami zōshi*"), *Shigarami zōshi* 1 (October 25, 1889): 1–2.

22. Ibid., 2.

23. Ōnishi Hajime too mobilizes the same rhetoric and argues that Japan needs to appropriate "Western thoughts" for the further development of its civilization in "Hihyōron." However, I cite Mori extensively here because of his recourse to "aesthetics." Mori's specification of "Western aesthetics" (not just "Western thoughts") becomes important later in the following chapters, as the concept of literature became associated with and homogenized as an aesthetic art form.

was claimed to accomplish this by guiding and evaluating literature from outside, by being orderly severed from what it criticizes. The process through which criticism emerged in such a manner well captures formal and intellectual transformations that Japan was undergoing in the late nineteenth century, under globally intensifying tensions of colonialism.

This project examines how criticism in Meiji Japan negated possibilities of literature turning into something other than an aesthetic, artistic, and autonomous object. A certain type of writing became exclusively elevated as "art" and rendered "beautiful." I argue in following chapters that predicating literature in association with transcendental beauty was particularly important for Japan in the global, colonial context, in that the concept of beauty as absolute and unchangeable allowed Meiji intellectuals to imagine a Japan that is unbound by local, hence "not fully civilized" specificities.

The homogenization of the concept of literature as an embodiment of beauty involves taxonomy in many ways; it requires detection, objectification, and classification of differences, for the purpose of ultimately eliminating them for the purpose of further refinement. Such taxonomical processes simultaneously facilitated the purification of the concept of literature and the standardization of the perception of what is to be considered "beautiful." To be more specific, the aesthetic characterization of literature took place against the identification, separation, and subsequent elimination of the political, historical, scientific, ethical, and religious from potential visions of literature. Though slightly different in nature, it is possible to include the practical in the list of things to be negated as literature's attributes. These characteristics were all intertwined with each other and cannot

be clearly distinguished from each other.²⁴ As I touched previously, visions of literature in late nineteenth-century Japan embraced a diverse range of elements. And yet, that diversity gradually became considered incompatible with the quintessential form of a modern national literature and suppressed in the end.

It is not irrelevant that categories separated from literature—such as politics, history, science, ethics, religion—are corresponding to what we are now familiar with as disciplinary divisions premised on the divisibility of intellectual labor. This is because the delineation of literature's boundaries went hand in hand with the institutional reformation of knowledge in Meiji Japan. For instance, the Imperial University in Tokyo, the first university in Japan, had four departments: law, science, letters, and medicine. As the time went by these disciplinary divisions became further subdivided.²⁵ Such departmentalization is of course arbitrary, and there is nothing inherent and essential in literature that needs to be severed from, say, politics, history, science, ethics, religion, or practicality. Nonetheless, literature came to be disconnected from these characteristics. The logic of civilization was indeed in operation.

What facilitated literature's divorce and independence from others was, again, criticism. Tokutomi Sohō, for instance, emphasizes the significance of the division of labor in the civilized society: "When matters develop along with their progress, their organs naturally grow into minute details, which leads to the exercising of the division of labor."²⁶

24. My chapters are not organized in the way that reinforces the divisions between these characteristics, as I argue such divisions are arbitrary and historically-constructed one.

25. See Amano Ikuo, *Daigaku no tanjō (The Birth of Universities)* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2009), Chapters 2 and 3.

26. Sohō, "Seijijō no bungyō" ("The Division of Labor in Politics"), *Kokumin no tomo* 21 (May 4, 1888): 1. Note that Sohō explains how "natural" the division of labor functions in an advanced society by mobilizing evolutionist rhetoric.

The purification process of literature's boundaries occurred concurrently when the division of labor was pursued in intellectual discourses and institutionalized in the system of knowledge as an important landmark for "Japan on its way to civilization."

Let me take "the political" for example and further explore the split between the political and the literary, manifested in Meiji Japan's domestic context.²⁷ I brief the history of domestic political movements in the first two decades of the Meiji period below, because it is closely linked to the purification processes of the concept of literature.

The Meiji government did not emerge as an absolute authority since its inauguration in the year of 1868. The claimed "restoration" of the imperial order of an unbroken lineage from the restorers' side itself bordered on a treason against the Tokugawa shogunate. In addition, even those who led the Restoration did not have a clear picture or consensus of what form a new Japan should take. The ground upon which the Meiji government stood was nothing but unstable. Naturally, thought control became one of the primary actions that the Meiji government had to initiate. They were especially sensitive towards discourses that questioned or possibly undermined their authority, which in turn shows their foundational insecurity.²⁸ Laws to restrict press, speech, and organization were continuously reinforced to keep the public order under strict governmental control.

27. For further information on the severing process of politics and literature (novels in particular), see Atsuko Ueda's scholarship. Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of "Literature" in Meiji Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

28. For more information on censorship in the early Meiji period, see Jay Rubin, *Injurious to Public Morals: Writers and the Meiji State* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1984).

Early regulations include the Publication Ordinance (shuppan jōrei) in 1869, the Press Ordinance (shinbunshi jōrei) and the Libel Act (zanbōritsu) in 1875. Massimiliano Tomasi, *Rhetoric in Modern Japan: Western Influences on the Development of Narrative and Oratorical Style* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 56.

The instability of the early Meiji government partially stemmed from how it restructured (or failed to restructure) its people. The government initiated the fundamental reorganization of preexisting classes into a different socio-political order with the Emperor at its top. In addition to one of the governments' earliest policies that revolved around the slogan "the equality of all classes" (*shimin byōdō*), the Tokugawa *han*-domain system was formally done away with in 1871, practically dissolving the infrastructural base upon which the former-ruling class, i.e., samurai was assembled. Unable to adjust themselves well to this transition, some former-samurai turned into malcontents and rose in revolt against the new government, the culmination of which was the Seinan War in 1877.²⁹

While military actions against the Meiji regime were failing one by one, the so-called Freedom and People's Rights Movement sprang up as a relatively non-violent political movement. The participants strongly opposed to the current oligarchical government that was almost exclusively run by the winning party of the Restoration that was constituted of those who belonged to former *satchōdohi han*-domains (Satsuma, Chōshū, Tosa, and Hizen). Needless to say, the Movement was severely oppressed under thought control regulations. This political activism pushed the government into having to issue an order under the name of the Meiji Emperor in 1881 that promises the establishment of the national diet. However, soon the Movement itself became virtually disintegrated. The year of 1890 serves as one distinctive index here; based on the imperial order issued in 1881, the first Imperial Diet was convened in 1890, following the proclamation of the Meiji Imperial Constitution and the first direct election conducted upon partial suffrage. The

29. The processes through which the samurai class was dissolved and reorganized to take part in the Meiji regime are detailed in Miyachi Masato's scholarship. Miyachi, vol.2 of *Bakumatsu ishin henkakushi (History of Reforms around the Turn from Edo to Meiji)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2012), 222–359. Especially see Chapters 46–47.

inauguration of the Diet tentatively but symbolically brought an end to multiple discursive and political actions that had been questioning the form of a new Japan under the Meiji regime.

This history becomes important, because debates about literature's boundaries concentrate between the late 1880s into the early 1890s, the years that followed those socio-political transformations. Concurrently to the gradual cessation of the aggressive query about how a new Japan should take shape, many debates with regard to the concept of literature began to surface in journals and papers. In other words, discussions about literature came to emerge saliently in intellectual discourses, when the form of Meiji Japan was about to be set officially. Interestingly, the content of discussions on literature that arose at this time corresponded to the dying out of the political activism. For instance, toward the end of the 1880s, so-called political novels that had been popular along with the unfolding of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement began to be rejected as unfit to the consummate body of literature for their politically-charged, often excessively molded and opportunistic plots.³⁰ A few polemics concerning whether or not literature is going downhill—the extreme decline of literature debate (*bungaku kyokusui ronsō*) and the *Tales of the Floating Castle* debate (*Ukishiro monogatari ronsō*), both proceeded around 1889–1890—also speak of the strong tendency to negate the political serving as an overriding feature of literature.

That said, I am not implying by any means that literature replaced politics. The surfacing of literature as a topic of intellectual discussions around this time was often explained that those who were oppressed in political struggles despaired of politics and

30. Tokutomi Sohō, "Kinrai ryūkō no seiji shōsetsu o hyōsu" ("Evaluating Political Novels That Are Popular Nowadays"), *Kokumin no tomo* 6 (July, 1887): 7–15.

turned to literature. However, this narrative is overly simplistic. A change of course from politics to literature: Such action is possible only when politics and literature are mutually exclusive, or at least postulated so. Given the line between politics and literature was much more blurry at that time than it may look to us now, it is only anachronistic to believe that the shift from one to the other occurred linearly and transparently. Repeating such a narrative overlooks multiple coexistent discursive forces in competition with one another regarding literature's boundaries, only to further suppress what that narrative itself is concealing. If the account of "from politics to literature" is the very product of various discursive selection, that provides all the more reason to analyze the debating processes through which that account was foregrounded and made believable. What if what looks like the turn from politics to literature was a transition from a certain pattern of politics to another manifestation of the political, from a certain notion of literature to a peculiar conception of the literary?³¹ What if the definition of the literary itself was being revised in connection with the political that was also being modified itself, throughout the discussion processes thereof?

If literature was severed from, posited against politics, it does not simply mean that literature became depoliticized. Such depoliticization is not depoliticization per se, because it also entails another facade of politicization. The same can be argued by extension in the case of the historical, the scientific, the ethical, the religious, and the practical. The point is that the aesthetic as a primary characteristic of literature was enabled only through it being run against, hence in relation to others. How did "the literary" become foregrounded and rendered aesthetic? In what space? What type of people became drawn to and invested in

31. Upon thinking about the political and the literary, I benefit much from Kimura Naoe's thorough examination of the shifting relationship between what is considered "political" and "literary." Kimura, *Seinen no tanjō*, 7–16.

the topic? What sort of rhetoric did they mobilize in order to delimit literature's boundaries? What did their words ended up enacting, regardless of their intentions? These are the question that this dissertation tries to address.

Criticism as Meta-Language

Criticism predated literature. The call for criticism in advance of literature resulted in the placing of the former at an advantageous position over the latter. As a primary actor that leads the proper germination and growth of literature, criticism was repeatedly claimed to stay unbound by personal tastes or interests, maintain objective distance from literature, and stand on the meta-level of what it evaluates. Note the slippage of two distances here; the temporal distance (criticism *before* literature) went side by side with the spatial metaphor (criticism *outside* literature). These distances postulated between criticism and literature granted an exceptional privilege to the former.³²

The privileging of criticism as an objective outsider prompted a demand to come up with standards of how to practice criticism "objectively" in front of a variety of written works. While criticism outside literature was formally being realized as the individuation of the criticism section in print media, *how* to stay outside became an urgent question that needs to be answered. Aforementioned Tsubouchi's essay "Hihyō no hyōjun" ("Standards of Criticism") observes that establishing criticism's standards with which to assess literature from an "impartial" standpoint was of much concern for many intellectuals at that time.³³ Similarly, Ōnishi Hajime's "Hihyōron" ("Discussions on Criticism") emphasizes critics'

32. Needless to say, such an advantage granted to criticism became transferred to intellectuals who practiced criticism by producing essays and engaging in debates, and valorized their position in society.

33. Tsubouchi, "Hihyō no hyōjun," 7.

necessity to equip themselves with "the highest standards" with which to invite literature's flourishing in the future.³⁴ These essays were certainly attempting to delineate criticism's boundaries, before and outside literature's.

Such enquiry into criticism's privilege over literature indicates that, not just literature, but criticism itself was objectified and served as the topic of theoretical discussions. That is, criticism was beginning to criticize its own peers and by extension itself. For instance, then-leading critic Ishibashi Ningetsu makes a self-referential statement in 1888: "I know that true and just criticism completes other authors' works, remedies unjust criticism, and simultaneously allows literature to make progress."³⁵ Pay attention to Ningetsu's differentiation of "true and just criticism" from the "unjust" kind. This phrasing is premised upon the thinking that criticism also needs to be evaluated for its "truth and justice" value. Ningetsu's conception of criticism as an object of criticism itself becomes more clearly verbalized in his 1890 essay. Commenting on Mori Ōgai/Rintarō's criticism,³⁶ Ningetsu argues:

[Mori's essay] Rigorously evaluated literary critics from last year without leaving anything out. I cannot affirm that his assessment nailed everything right. Nonetheless, in the sense that he meticulously examined contemporary critics with his aesthetic eyes, enlightened the beauty of their tastes of poetry in so doing, and remedied their evil practices, I cannot help but express my deepest gratitude. . . . If there was nobody who criticizes critics, they could end up decaying in stagnation.³⁷

34. Ōnishi, "Hiyōron," 26.

35. Ishibashi Ningetsu, "Yabu no uguisu no saihyō" ("Detailed Commentaries of Warbler in the Bush"), *Kokumin no tomo* 25 (July 6, 1888), Appendix 23.

36. Mori, "Meiji nijūni-nen hiyōka no shigan" ("Critics' Poetic Tastes from the 22nd Year of Meiji"), *Shigarami zōshi* 4 (January 25, 1890).

37. Ningetsu, "Chikagoro no sanki" ("Three Hopes of These Days"), *Kokumin no tomo* 73 (February 13, 1890): 28.

If criticism follows Ningetsu's instruction, it inevitably becomes conscious of itself. In other words, while assessing literature from a distance, criticism also comes to know that it is offering itself as an object to be criticized, both from outside and even self-referentially from within. Such self-awareness of criticism invites an infinite impulse to carve a liminal space where criticism can be differentiated from what it is evaluating. As a result, criticism finds itself caught in an endless lapse into searching for its meta-ness.

The individuation of criticism in major periodicals in the late 1880s formally set in motion criticism's exceptionalism and continued to facilitate its long-time perpetuation. A few years into the 1890s, criticism was already developing into an autonomous genre, a mode of writing that does not necessarily involve evaluations of publications that were designated as literature. One important reason why this dissertation investigates debates that ensued in the late 1880s into the early 1890s regarding literature's boundaries, and by extension about criticism's limits stems from here; the processes through which debates purified the category of literature simultaneously reveal how criticism developed almost fetishistic clinging to its own meta-language-ness.

By uncovering the emergence of criticism's exceptionalism developed in late nineteenth-century Japan, this dissertation wishes to make a contribution to broader fields of studies that either remotely or directly have a say in "critical" reading, writing, and thinking. Especially, if our time is pushing scholars in the humanities and the sciences to reconfigure what this critical stands for,³⁸ it would be beneficial to contemplate why, and since when a certain mode of reading, writing, and thinking began to be considered critical, hence exceptional in a historically specific context. As such, this study wishes to make a humble

38. For instance, we can think of multiple possibilities of "postcritical reading" proposed by Rita Felski. Felski, *The Limits of Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015). See Chapter 5 in particular.

suggestion: If scholars of contemporary and coming generations are required to redefine the criticality of their research practices through their own works, their scholarship may end up looking drastically different from what their predecessors have been producing.

Chapter Outline

The following chapter scrutinizes how criticism rhetorically constructed literature yet to come and prepared its aestheticization and artification. Vision is the key word here, and I use it in two different ways: Criticism *envisioned* literature as a linguistic art that enables *visual* reproduction of the invisible. In its foreseeing of literature, criticism employed rhetoric of visibility—"literature makes visible the invisible"—to identify literature's mission as a linguistic art. The envisioning of the invisible that is to be visualized in literature is a historically-determined and ideologically-charged event, and it was very much in tandem with the rapid technological progress that Japan was experiencing as part of its modernization projects. By uncovering the assumptions underlying theoretical discussions about literature's boundaries, this chapter shows that criticism's foreseeing of literature is indicative of wider shifts in modes of perception. Taking my point of departure in Maeda Ai's insight on the "visual revolution"—the shift in the perception of "reality" that took place along with Meiji Japan's technological advancement—this chapter delves into the relationship between technologies, perceptions, and rhetoric that came to manifest in the scene of writing around the late 1880s.

Chapter Three looks into the "Literature and Nature" debate ("Bungaku to shizen" *ronsō*, 1889), fought between journalist Iwamoto Yoshiharu and doctor-writer Mori Ōgai/Rintarō and traces how the latter attempted to underline the autonomy of literature specifically by severing the literary from the scientific. When Iwamoto promoted an

idealistic vision of literature that simultaneously caters to truth, goodness, and beauty, Mori manipulated the former's arguments and completely negated them. In so doing, Mori elevated his own vision of literature that took its base in "the beautiful idea." The ways in which Mori proceeded the debate, however, reveal a contradiction, in that Mori rejected "scientific" literature by having recourse to "scientific" rhetoric and methodology. Reading Mori's rhetorical moves closely, this chapter aims at disclosing the arbitrariness of the division of intellectual labor and highlighting a question: Where is criticism located vis-à-vis what it says about literature?

Chapter Four focuses on Mori Ōgai/Rintarō's first creative fiction "The Dancing Girl" and a polemic revolved around it afterwards ("Maihime" *ronsō*, 1890). When critic Ishibashi Ningetsu problematized the ending of the story, the original author moved swiftly and combatted thoroughly against Ningetsu's criticism. The ways in which Mori accomplished this, however, engendered strange effects; through their aggressive interactions, the putative border drawn between criticism and literature, and by extension reality and fiction, began to collapse. This indeed marks the failure of criticism, which positioned itself as an objective outsider of what it assesses. However, this failure was accompanied by a certain word mobilized in the debate that fell entirely at odds with the time and space within which it was inserted. This chapter argues that the oddity stemming from the appearance of that word served a counterproductive function and intervened in the linear, progressive view of civilizational history that Meiji Japan was strongly endorsing.

Chapter Five investigates the negation of the ideal debate (*botsurisō ronsō*) that developed between Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō and Mori Ōgai/Rintarō around the year of 1890. Mori fiercely attacked Tsubouchi, when the latter made a statement about how Shakespeare's masterpieces could not be reduced to a singular interpretation. In fact, their

visions of literature came very close to each other in terms of how they conceptualized the absolute essence of literature from which to seek universality. And yet, Mori's rhetoric and methodology in the debate staged the appearance of the conflict and obscured their proximity. Pushed by Mori's belligerence, Tsubouchi wrote excusatory essays to suggest a ceasefire, written in a traditional playful writing style. The mobilization of such a style is certainly disjoined from the contemporary discourses that called for modern literature and sophisticated criticism. In the allegorical narrative that Tsubouchi presented in his playful essays, however, Tsubouchi ended up producing an alternative, exceedingly unthinkable scenario, given Meiji Japan's imperial context. In this happening, this chapter observes criticism that was fleeing away from what historically conditioned it.

The concluding chapter analyzes the interrelations with life debate (*jinsei sōshō ronsō*, 1893) through which journalist Yamaji Aizan and writer Kitamura Tōkoku discussed literature's purposiveness. Against Aizan who stressed literature's interrelation with life, Tōkoku promoted literature's singularity and autonomy. While conversing with his opponent, Tōkoku's criticism repeated the purity of literature, eventually falling in monologism and engaging with nothing other than itself. This chapter positions their controversy as one reference point of the purification process of literature's as well as criticism's boundaries. My discussion concludes with an indication of a strange historiographical tendency prevalent among scholars of modern Japanese literature from later periods. Many scholarship situated Tōkoku's criticism at the ultimate stronghold of "pure literature," in a sense enacting the inverse, perverse relationship between criticism and literature that came to be formed in late nineteenth-century Japan.

CHAPTER TWO

Making Visible the Invisible: Promised Vision of Literature

Literature was becoming into an aesthetic object, an embodiment of "beauty" (*bi*), a type of "fine arts" (*bijutsu*, a means to materialize *bi*) that also indexed a modern and independent form of knowledge in Japan from the late 1880s into the early 1890s. Throughout this dissertation, I demonstrate that discussing Japan's own literature in relation to beauty became a growing consensus in criticism produced by Meiji intellectuals at that time. I argue that beauty turned into defining rhetoric of literature, as it came to stand for a transcendental value that is unbound by temporal, local specificities. The premise of transcendence was important in the context of Meiji Japan, because it could function as that which overcomes the civilizational hierarchy interposed between "the civilized West" and "half-civilized Japan." In addition, the aestheticization of literature was necessitated, so that literature could distinguish itself from other forms of knowledge, such as science, ethics, and history. Before delving into different manifestations of how beauty became a pivotal rhetoric of literature in multiple debates, I wish to map out in this chapter the process through which the relationship between literature as a linguistic medium and beauty as a constitutional quality of fine arts was beginning to be solidified. To be more specific, I aim at sketching how the aestheticization of literature, the categorization of literature as a fine art took place in tandem with Japan's modernization projects, and how such characterization of literature was beginning to proceed rhetorically in the practice of criticism.

Vision is a key here. While envisioning literature to arrive in the future, criticism began to mobilize rhetoric of (in)visuality to delineate literature's mission: Literature makes visible the invisible. Literature was beginning to be posited as a medium for visual

reproduction of the invisible from the 1880s on. While this invisible was variously referred to as "truth," "divinity," or "enormity,"³⁹ "beauty," among others, eventually gained wider traction as a referent of the invisible in discussions regarding literature's boundaries. The valorization of "beauty" took place against a historical backdrop of the institutionalization of "fine arts" as one crucial marker of a modern Japan. In my observation, Japan's technological development played an indispensable part in facilitating the positing of the invisible that is to be captured in a linguistic art. The realization of the existence of the invisible, which was triggered by technological innovation in the early Meiji period, ultimately helped Japanese intellectuals imagine universal beauty that is not bound to specific temporality and spatiality.

More and more scholarship has been produced in the past few decades, investigating literature in relation to Meiji Japan's technological transformations. In addition to the forerunning works of Kamei Hideo, Kōno Kensuke, and many others, Seth Jacobowitz's recent publication benefitted not only modern Japanese literature studies but also broader fields of media studies, by presenting multiple possible interrelations and interactions that technologies had with linguistic practices.⁴⁰ The implications of their scholarship range very vastly. In this short chapter, I wish to make a small contribution to these fields by thinking

39. "Truth" is touched on in this chapter. "Divinity" appears in Iwamoto Yoshiharu's theory of literature, which I discuss in Chapter Three. The so-called extreme decline of literature debate (*bungaku kyokusui ronsō*) and the *Tales of the Floating Castle* debate (*Ukishiro monogatari ronsō*), both of which took place between 1889–1890, had excessive recourse to the rhetoric of "enormity" that is to be manifested through literature.

40. Kamei, *Kansei no henkaku (Transformations of Sensibility)* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1983). Kōno, *Shomotsu no kindai: Media no bungakushi (Modernity of Books)* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1999). Jacobowitz, *Writing Technology in Meiji Japan: A Media History of Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

Though not directly addressing to the field of literature, studies of Dōshin Satō and Maki Fukuoka have been helpful resources to my project. Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State: the Politics of Beauty*, trans. Hiroshi Nara (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011). Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

about how technologies become translated into different technologies. That is to say, when certain technologies revise how the human sensorium functions as Walter Benjamin suggests,⁴¹ how does modified sensorium move the ways in which writing—another form of technology—is produced? Specifically focusing on the writing of criticism that delimited literature, this chapter sheds light on the translational relationship between technologies and the visual sensorium.

Literature began to be categorized as a type of fine arts by the late 1880s. One of the most prominent examples of such positioning of literature is Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō's *Shōsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885–1886), which marks one of the inaugural attempts to systematize the novel as a dominant genre of literature in Japan.⁴² Repetitively in this work, Tsubouchi describes the novel as a fine art ("*shōsetsu wa bijutsu nari.*"), which in turn demonstrates how the novel was *not* considered a fine art among his contemporaries. Tsubouchi's disciple Futabatei Shimei also names the novel as a typical form of fine arts in his 1886 essay "Shōsetsu sōron" ("A General Theory of the Novel").

The defining of literature in relation to aesthetics went side by side with the institutionalization processes of fine arts and the topicalization of beauty in intellectual discourses. During the first two decades of the Meiji period, aesthetics was growing into an

41. Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility," in vol.4 of *Selected Writings* eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2003), 251–283.

42. How the novel became the primary form of literature requires thorough, rigorous research, which goes beyond this dissertation's capacity. To briefly explain my current thinking: I draw on Kimura Naoe's scholarship and say that the prioritization of the novel as literature had much to do with the discovery/cultivation of the "social" arena that was taking place in mid-Meiji. Kimura, "Hihyō no tanjō."

object to be established as well as an erudite topic to be talked about. Let me briefly go over the rhetorical and institutional genealogies of aesthetics of that time.

Bi, the word now commonly translated as beauty, came to be stabilized as a Japanese equivalent of "beauty," "*beauté*" "*schoonheid*," or "*Schönheit*" in the middle of the nineteenth century.⁴³ As a derivative compound word of *bi*, *bijutsu* was first used as a translation of "art" in the world exhibition held in Vienna in 1873.⁴⁴ In the 1870s, intellectual Nishi Amane authored *Bimyōgaku setsu* (*Theory of Aesthetics*), defining "aesthetics" as "a branch of philosophy."⁴⁵ Ryūchikai (the Dragon Pond Society) was established in 1879, in order to preserve Japan's traditional local artifacts. In 1881, the Imperial University of Tokyo, which played a central role to systematize and produce knowledge, started a new course to teach "aesthetics."⁴⁶ Ernest Fenollosa's famous lecture "Bijutsu shinsetsu" ("True Theory of Art") was given in 1882, endorsing ("half-civilized") Japanese arts from the ("civilized") American perspective. Journals that thematized fine arts began to appear in the middle of the Meiji teens.⁴⁷ Just around the same time, translations of

43. Yanabu Akira, *Hon'yakugo seiritsu jijō* (*How Translation Came Into Being*) (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1982), 67–68. The commonly accepted understanding of inter-lingual translation often presupposes two languages: one to translate from and another to translate into. I do not deny that translation takes place as an exchange of something, often but not limited to, linguistic. Yet, considering that translation occurs between two corresponding linguistic corpora is too limited, in that it overlooks potential heterogeneity, incompatibility, and amorphousness that any language carries by nature. Translation stages an appearance of a transparent equal exchange. Nonetheless, this putative equality is a rather arbitrary and retroactive one.

44. Michele Marra, *Modern Japanese Aesthetics: A Reader* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), 309.

45. Nishi, *Bimyōgaku setsu*, in vol.79 of *Meiji bungaku zenshū* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1975), 3. Originally written in the 1870s.

46. This course was taught under the philosophy division of the department of literature. Yanagida Izumi, *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō ge* (*Literary Thoughts of Early Meiji, Part Two*), in vol.6 of *Meiji bungaku kenkyū* (*Studies of Meiji Literature*) (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1965), 45.

47. *Dai Nihon bijutsu shinpō* (*Great Bulletin of Japanese Fine Arts*) started by Ryūchikai in 1883 was one such example. Yanagida, *Meiji shoki no bungaku shisō*, 45–63.

aesthetic theories were made available and circulated among intellectuals.⁴⁸ Both the inauguration of Tokyo Bijutsu Gakkō (the Tokyo School of Fine Arts) in 1887 and its official opening in 1889, and the establishment of Teikoku Hakubutsukan (the Imperial Museum) in 1889 epitomize how fine arts were officially installed as a constitutive part of a modern Japan.

That said, this strong attention to aesthetics does not mean that beauty and fine arts had clear, common referents upon which everyone would agree. The range of what these words could cover was still under exploration and contestation. For instance, in an essay evaluating aesthetic theories available in his time including Plato, Bacon, Fenollosa, to Véron, Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō condemns the ambiguity of these philosophers' definition of beauty.⁴⁹ Interestingly, this essay came out in 1886, a few months after his *Shōsetsu shinzui* was completed. That is to say, while inquiring the base principles of beauty on the one hand, he was already using the very word to define the novel on the other. I am not singling out Tsubouchi's gesture to problematize it as his theoretical naiveté, though. Rather, his usage of beauty demonstrates how this ambiguous word was still being mobilized as a powerful rhetorical device to valorize certain writing practices, despite, or perhaps due to its amorphousness.

In fact, intellectuals willingly chose to talk about aesthetics in the public sphere at that time, no matter what they meant by aesthetics. Regardless of their intentions, the point was not in the defining of beauty but in the very act of discussing aesthetics in public.

48. Eugène Véron's *L'Esthétique* was translated by Nakae Chōmin and published as *Ishi bigaku* in 1883-1884. Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky's "The Idea of Art" came out as "Bijutsu no hongi" ("True Significance of Art") in Futabatei Shimei's translation in 1885.

49. Tsubouchi, "Bi towa nanzoya" ("What Is Beauty?"), *Gakugei zasshi* 4 (October 5, 1886): 2. The essay was serialized in *Gakugei zasshi* issues 2, 4, 5, and 6, respectively appearing on September 5, October 5, October 20, and November 5.

Above-mentioned Nishi Amane's writing is suggestive to unpack this urge to topicalize aesthetics formally. Nishi writes, "From the start, there is no need to hesitate to argue that fine arts enrich humanity and helps the world of humans to progress to a higher level."⁵⁰ Fine arts in this writing are posited as a means to cultivate people and to lead their society to a more advanced state. Clearly, such a statement is premised upon the civilizational logic. When fine arts are assigned a role to measure the degree of civilization, whatever society whose people appreciate fine arts becomes qualified as advanced. Thus, discussing aesthetics itself had deep overtones for Meiji intellectuals, as the attention they pay to it could be a major determinant of the degree of their own civilization. In a sense, it was necessary for them to seek aesthetics in order to uplift Japan, at least discursively, to a higher level of civilization.

That historical background aside, what I wish to highlight through the rest of this chapter is how the criticism produced at this historical moment was rhetorically bridging certain writing practices and fine arts, and what capacity of the linguistic medium called literature they are designating as fine arts. Vision becomes important here, as criticism began to have recourse to the rhetoric of visibility and invisibility in foreseeing a perfect configuration of a linguistic art.⁵¹

Let us look at Futabatei's "Shōsetsu sōron" closely and examine how he theorizes the connection between the novel and fine arts. Drawing on Russian intellectual Belinsky's art theory, Futabatei begins his essay with phenomenological terms:

50. Nishi, *Bimyōgaku setsu*, 7.

51. I owe my thinking of vision to Akira Mizuta Lippit's thought-provoking reading of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō's *In Praise of Shadows*. Lippit, *Atomic Light (Shadow Optics)* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 22.

Generally, when there is a form, there is an idea. The idea comes into view through the form, and, the form depends on the idea for its existence. Seen from the viewpoint of existence, the idea needs the form and the form requires the idea. Therefore, it is difficult to say which is more important and which is less so. Yet, when their inherent characteristics are taken into account, the idea is essential. The idea can be revealed externally in the form precisely because it exists within, so it still exists without the form. However, the form cannot exist for any second without the idea. . . . The form is contingent and always changing. The idea belongs to nature and is forever unchanging.⁵²

Note Futabatei's dualistic conception of the world that consists of idea and form. In his schematization, the idea, which is invisible but eternally immutable, is doubtlessly placed above the form, which is visible but contingent upon external factors and subject to change. Throughout the essay, Futabatei frequently uses the Chinese character for "to see" in referring to the state of "becoming phenomenalized" (*arawaru*). He also renders the same reading (*arawaru*) to the character for "to form" (or "to become formed"). Thus, in Futabatei's vocabularies, "seeing," "being phenomenalized," and "forming," and by extension "vision," "phenomena," and "form," are inseparably linked.

What makes the idea accessible in the visible, phenomenalized form is, according to Futabatei, fine arts. He argues, "it is fine arts' service that makes the formless idea, which is unintelligible to this extent, easily accessible to common people," "by rendering it a form."⁵³ "The novel" is then posited as a vital category of "fine arts," for it "directly senses and captures the natural state (idea) in various, miscellaneous phenomena (form)

52. Futabatei Shimei, "Shōsetsu sōron," *Chūō gakujutsu zasshi* 26 (April, 1886): 38–40. Many scholars have pointed out that Futabatei was indirectly introduced to Hegel through Belinsky. See Kitaoka Seiji, "'Shōsetsu sōron' zaigen kō: Futabatei to Berinsukī," *Kokugo to kokubungaku* (September, 1965): 12–30, Togawa Shinsuke, *Futabatei Shimei ron* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1971), 150–176, or Komori Yōichi, *Buntai toshite no monogatari* (*Narratives as Writing Styles*) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1988), 96–124.

53. Futabatei, "Shōsetsu sōron," 41–2.

phenomenalized in this floating world."⁵⁴ According to this logic, the novel is identified as a fine art because it materializes and visualizes the formless, invisible idea. Though not as rigorous as Futabatei's "Shōsetsu sōron," this line of thinking was already latent in Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō's *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Multiple times in his theory, Tsubouchi designates "the novel" as "fine arts" for its capacity to "make what is difficult to be seen seeable" ("*miegataki mono o mieshimuru*").⁵⁵

The novel, a linguistic art called literature, makes visible the invisible.⁵⁶ The invisible can be visualized through written language on the surface of paper, and that as a whole manifests beauty and constitutes fine arts. It is at this historical moment of the late nineteenth century that such a vision of literature came into being and began to be normalized in Japan. What was claimed to be literature's function—visualizing the invisible—is certainly not a given. What physically appears as literature is usually language transcribed on the two-dimensional paper, and, there is no reason to believe that something invisible is enclosed within the surface of the paper. In that sense, the emergence of this vision of literature is a not only historical, but rather ideologically-charged event.⁵⁷

In understanding what prepared such a vision of literature, we can first turn to contemporary critic Maeda Ai's Benjaministic insights on the visual revolution—the

54. Futabatei, "Shōsetsu sōron," 42.

55. Tsubouchi, *Shōsetsu shinzui* (Tokyo: Shōgetsudō, 1886), 5. A few months after the completion of *Shōsetsu shinzui*, Tsubouchi emphasizes how visual and linguistic art works "impress people by dexterously transposing and visualizing things, in the form of paintings, poetry, and prose, that are difficult to see today or impossible to take place in the world." Tsubouchi, "Bi towa nanzoya."

56. Tsubouchi and Futabatei's contemporary Saganoya Omuro similarly proposes that novel-writers can achieve the task of "disclosing the formless loftiness" because they are "the brain of all artists." Saganoya, "Shōsetsuka no sekinin" ("Responsibilities of Novel Writers"), *Shigarami zōshi* 2 (November 25, 1889): 1–2.

57. In one of my previous notes, I mentioned that the phonocentrism-driven language reform movement known as *genbun itchi* surfaced intellectual discursive spaces in the 1880s and 1890s. This movement can be also understood as an exploration of how to visualize the invisible in written language, when the invisible is linked to the "natural, unmediated" state of the interior, believed to be transparently captured in speech.

perceptual transformation that took place along with the technological advancement in the first two decades of the Meiji period.⁵⁸ The implications of the visual revolution are not negligible, in that, by reflecting on the context of Meiji Japan, it invites us into thinking about how technologies and human perceptions correlate with one another. Maeda argues that, as a result of accelerating acquisition of new scientific, technological knowledge, a peculiar mode of seeing arose in late nineteenth century Japan. This new mode of seeing prompted the dividing of the seer from the seen. Or rather, I would go further to argue that such a division further accelerated the emergence of a new mode of seeing, i.e., an analytic gaze that aspires to objectify what is seen on the exterior, dissect it into more minute segments, so as to make it reproducible.⁵⁹

The proceeding of the visual revolution is not unrelated to Meiji government's policies known as *fukoku kyōhei* (enrich the nation, strengthen the army) and *shokusan kōgyō* (promotion of industry and manufacturing), which necessitated quick mastering of advanced sciences and technologies for the purpose of building a new Japan. Think about how militarization and industrialization require scientific, technological knowledge that prioritizes the seeking of accuracy and exactness. For instance, on the militarization front, national defense against Euro-American imperialist expansion was an urgent issue for Japan since the late Edo period. Under the continual threat of invasion, the Tokugawa government

58. Maeda Ai, "Kindai bungaku to katsujiteki sekai" ("Modern Literature and the World of Printing Type"), in vol.2 of *Maeda Ai chosakushū: Kindai dokusha no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1989), 330–332.

59. Although Maeda observes the perceptual shift particularly notable in the context of the Meiji period, the value of mimetic reproduction had been underlined in the field of painting practices long before the Tokugawa regime was dethroned. For instance, in 1799, painter Shiba Kōkan is already pointing to the connection between certain painting technics (i.e., "western," oil paintings produced in linear perspective) and a vision that seeks verisimilitude for the purpose of mimetic reproduction. In that sense, the visual revolution did not need to wait for the late nineteenth century until it was set in motion. See Shiba, "Seiyō gadan" ("Discussions on Western Painting"), in vol. 3 of *Shiba Kōkan zenshū*, eds. Asakura Haruhiko et al. (Tokyo: Yasaka Shobō, 1994), 140–143.

tried to quickly appropriate cutting-edge sciences and technologies in order to prevent total subjugation to imperialism. Soon after the forced opening of its diplomacy to foreign powers, the Tokugawa government founded Yōgakusho (the Institute for Western Studies) in 1855. This Institute established the painting division in 1861, whose official mission was to fortify military defense and protect Japan's borders. Apparently, the division aimed at mastering utilitarian skills for mimetic reproduction of the physical world, which were necessary for mapmaking and technical drawings.⁶⁰ Such intense attempts to reproduce the material world in mimetic order, the search for fidelity through scientific, technological knowledge, accounts for one strong underlying force that paved the way for the revolution in how things are visually experienced.

The new mode of seeing generated excessive attention to what is seen on the outer surface. Maeda argues that such obsession with seeing the reproducible exterior that emerged from the highly political arena became transported to the scene of writing. As its prominent example, Maeda names *Shōsetsu shinzui* and points out Tsubouchi's exceptionally strong insistence on objective seeing upon writing the novel. Maeda's observation makes sense to a certain degree, in that Tsubouchi does frequently mobilize the rhetoric of visibility in the work. The analogy between writers and painters in *Shōsetsu shinzui* for instance demonstrates Tsubouchi's keen interest in writing as a medium for visual reproduction.

However, the discussion in *Shōsetsu shinzui* entails more than just the seer-seen divide and accompanying strong attention to what appears on the external surface of objects. To reiterate: Shōyō repeats that the novel is a fine art because it "makes what is

60. See Alice Y. Tseng, "Kuroda Seiki's 'Morning Toilette' on Exhibition in Modern Kyoto," *The Art Bulletin* 90, no.3 (September, 2008): 419–420.

difficult to be seen seeable." In this logic, a linguistic art called literature needs to expose the invisible on its flat, two-dimensional plane made out of paper. Tsubouchi's phrasing clearly indicates another layer of visibility, in addition to the one stemming from the seer-seen divide. That is to say, in order to "make what is difficult to be seen seeable," there has to be a vision that sees through the surface of objects, a vision that springs out from the division already within the seen, between the visible and the invisible.⁶¹ Futabatei's dualism of idea and form similarly corresponds to the split between the visible and the invisible. What is left unarticulated in Maeda's discussion, despite its significance, is this leap from the seer-seen divide to the visible-invisible split that came to manifest in these intellectuals' theories of literature.

We need to contemplate this juncture carefully. What facilitated the shift from the seer-seen divide in the visual perception to the visible-invisible split in criticism of literature? Thinking about this juncture prompts an interesting, trans-technological question. That is, how do human perceptions, which are already transformed by technological innovations, become translated into other technologies such as writing?⁶² In other words, when technologies for mimetic reproduction changed visual experiences in late nineteenth-century Japan, how did this change affect writing about literature, i.e., linguistic production of criticism that was aiming to foresee literature's boundaries?

61. As many scholars have convincingly demonstrated, it is reductive and misleading to situate *Shōsetsu shinzui* at the beginning of Japanese literature's realism—realism as in the sense of mimesis—because Tsubouchi's theory of the novel inarguably focuses on reproducing something beyond the superficial. See Kamei Hideo, *"Shōsetsu"ron: Shōsetsu shinzui to kindai (Discussing the "Novel": The Essence of the Novel and Modernity)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1999), and Ueda, *Concealment of Politics*.

62. I am drawing on Walter Ong's study and considering writing as a technology, in the sense that "writing restructures consciousness." Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). See Chapter 4.

What mediated the leap from the seer-seen dichotomy to the visible-invisible divide was a particular set of rhetoric that developed around the revolution in how the material world is visually experienced. The visual revolution entailed the distinguishing of the seen and the excessive attention to the visible exterior of the physical world that can be reproduced mimetically. What is important is that this new visual experience that seeks the formal, reproducible appearance began to be grasped with the rhetoric of *jitsu* (the real, the actual, the material, or the practical). To examine this linguistic background, I now turn to art historian Dōshin Satō's scholarship. In his brilliant analyses of the establishment and categorization of fine arts in Meiji Japan, Satō explains the connotations of the character *jitsu* in relation to its formative history as follows:

. . . , *jitsu* very closely [referred] to the reality of life, that is, the actual, day-to-day sense of existence, as shown by such compounds in which this character is used as *jitsuri* (use, utility), *jitsueki* (profit), and *jikken* (real power). In art, *jitsu* connotes reality in the sense that an object physically exists.⁶³

This conceptual term *jitsu* engendered many derivatives in late nineteenth century Japan, which coincided with the turning up of various other compounds that carried similar meanings. Satō continues:

During the *bakumatsu* [the end of the Tokugawa regime] period and through the first half of the Meiji period when a reorganization of concept words was taking place, we find an assortment of words that are related to the *jitsu* (reality) of the object being described. To list some of the words describing the object or the appearance of the object that caught my attention, we have *jitsubutsu* (actual objects), *jibutsu* (objects), *shinbutsu* (true object), *shinkei* (true shape), *bukkei* (object shape), *keijō* (object shape), *keishō* (shape), *keitai* (appearance), and *gaibō* (outward appearance), just to name a few.⁶⁴

63. Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State*, 241.

64. *Ibid.*, 247.

The word *jitsu* was glued to a certain visual experience that seeks a mimetically reproducible aspect of objects. In other words, Meiji intellectuals came to apprehend that experience of seeing the formal, external appearance of objects largely through the rhetoric of *jitsu*, followed by other compounds that are similarly tuned to describe the formal aspect of objects.

The proliferation of *jitsu* and other compounds that largely entailed the meaning of materiality up until the late 1880s, however, was soon met by the development of intellectual interests in what exceeds the physical, visible materiality. Below I quote Satō's observation of the discursive shift that took place around the year of 1890 surrounding the rhetoric of *jitsu*.

Among the words referring to objects, we note that more words describe their appearance than their existence. This is noteworthy, as we know that in the Meiji 20s (1887–96), a precipitous change began to occur in which more debate would center on the ontological existence of objects instead of their appearance."⁶⁵

In terms of the timing (between the late 1880s and the early 1890s) and how the transition occurred (the attention paid less to what appears on the material surface and more to what lies beyond it), this change that Satō is commenting on here is not unrelated to the emergence of the rhetoric of the invisible that criticism began to mobilize upon theorizing literature as a fine art. In fact, Satō even argues that the theorization and verbalization of the concept *jitsu* in the sense of "reality" as in a physical likeness, as we can see in the compound *shajitsu* (transposition of the real, mimetic realism), "took place in the Meiji 20s

65. Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State*, 247.

(1887–96) with literature in the leadership role."⁶⁶ If literature served a leading part in the discourses surrounding *jitsu* in the sense of mimetic reproduction, it is all the more necessary to investigate how this discursive tendency to feature "existence" rather than "appearance"/*jitsu* manifested in discussions on literature at that time.

Upon thinking about this shift of intellectual interests, it is beneficial to explore the contemporary linguistic environment surrounding the rhetoric of *jitsu*. Another crucial term that we need to look into here, in addition to *jitsu*, is *shin* (truth, sincerity). As a matter of fact, the semantic range of *jitsu* came in close proximity to that of *shin* and even assumed a certain extent of interchangeability in the first few decades of the Meiji period.⁶⁷ To be more specific, a physical likeness that was grasped through the rhetoric of *jitsu* became conflated with the sense of an inherent truth value that the word *shin* entailed.⁶⁸

The compound word *shashin* that literally means "transposition of the truth" best describes the overlapping of *jitsu* and *shin*. *Shashin* had been used to refer to portraiture during the Edo period, and it had a strong register of "verisimilitude."⁶⁹ The same word was mobilized to refer to the technology as well as the image of "photography" and its usage came to be stabilized in the early Meiji period. Such usage of the word indicates that a

66. Satō, *Modern Japanese Art and the Meiji State*, 248–249.

67. Saeki Junko's scholarship looks into the development of the rhetoric of *shin* in the first two decades of the Meiji period. Saeki, "'Shizen' to 'shinjitsu'" ('Nature' and 'Truth'), *Nihon no bigaku (Japanese Aesthetics)* 19 (1992): 142–159.

68. On a side note, Tsubouchi in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, Futabatei in "Shōsetsu sōron," and Saganoya in "Shōsetsuka no sekinin" all have recourse to the rhetoric of *shin*, associated with the sense of the truth value.

69. Aforementioned Shiba Kōkan is already using the term *shin* to describe mimetic images produced through oil painting technics. Shiba, "Seiyō gadan."

In his 1865 essay, oil painter Takahashi Yuichi also uses the term *shashin* to explain "pictorial methods in Western countries" that allow mimetic reproduction. Takahashi Yuichi, "Yōgakyoku tekigen" ("Remarks Concerning the Western Painting Bureau"), in *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, trans. Maki Fukuoka (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 198.

verisimilar, photographic image that mimetically captures the physical appearance was comprehended in the rhetoric of "truth." When photography gained wide popularity in the beginning of Meiji, the visual experience of images that reproduced a physical likeness, ones that the photographic device engendered came to be further naturalized as an experience of "truth." Regardless of whether the technology of photography can actually capture truth or not, photographically reproduced images became believed to allow people to have access to "truth" visually. To put this differently, the word *shin* was glued to a certain visual experience generated through photographic technology, and people at that time came to apprehend that experience specifically by using the word *shin*. Although what photography engenders is simply one out of many possible images that can represent objects, Meiji people began to perceive a photographic image exclusively as verisimilar. Thus, a new rhetorical and empirical order that conflates *jitsu* with *shin* ensued.

Moreover, the conflation of *jitsu* and *shin* both on the rhetorical and visual-experiential level also modified the conception of the materiality of objects. The gaze that believes in the possibility of seeing the invisible through the visible objects transforms the material appearance into a passing point, tuning itself to search for the invisible that lies beyond the visible exterior. Yet, the probing gaze conversely generates the excessive, obsessive attention to the surface, only to vacate and annihilate its materiality. The visible exterior needs to be erased and obliterated, while still working as a permeable membrane encapsulating and enabling access to the invisible. A physical exterior becomes more than just what appears on the surface; it needs to be porous and point to the truth value that is hidden beneath the visible, outer layer.

The real that reaches the truth, the truth that appears in the real: What Satō is observing in the change in discursive attention from objects' appearance to their existence

could be understood as one symptom of the fusing of *jitsu* and *shin*. The rapid advancement of technologies for mimetic reproduction in the late nineteenth century instigated the multiplication of words that are particularly attentive to the external appearance of objects. The result was a simultaneous seeing of appearance and existence, the real and the truth, the surface and the beyond, the visible and the invisible, in the very materiality of what is being seen.

The visual revolution should be understood as a revolution, not only perceptual but also cognitive. On the sensory level, the revolution entailed the shift in how objects are visually perceived exclusively from the viewpoint of mimetic reproducibility. When that shift was translated in the language of the real and the true, it was accompanied by the awakening that "reality" and "truth" had never been grasped as such until this point. Behind the premise of the invisible that exists beyond the visible exterior lies this cognition.

The emergence of the rhetoric of the invisible in theories of literature foregrounds the impulse to transpose this new vision, both perceptual and cognitive, into a linguistic form. What Meiji intellectuals designated as literature, a type of fine arts, and a means to incarnate beauty is the believed capacity of a linguistic medium to reproduce the invisible on the two-dimensional paper surface. Such a conception of literature—a linguistic medium that captures the invisible—poses interesting questions to literature's own visibility and materiality: If literature consists of language that is transposed on paper, how does the invisible become reproduced on the visible, material paper surface, and, how is it believable that the invisible is visualized on the two-dimensional paper space? These points did not seem to have occurred to Meiji intellectuals. And yet, I do not consider this as an indication of their theoretical incapability or immaturity by any means. Rather, precisely because these questions remained untouched, this conception of literature assumes a highly historical and

ideological overtone. The fact that the invisible that is to be encapsulated in literature was becoming uniformly conceived as universal beauty between the late 1880s and the early 1890s also underlines the historical, ideological configuration of literature.

On a final note of this chapter, I wish to turn back to Futabatei's "Shōsetsu sōron" and look into how he explains the process of the "artistic" production of literature. The examination of this becomes important for my discussions on the prioritization of aesthetics that I demonstrate in following chapters. With his radical rhetoricization of the visible and the invisible, Futabatei's theory introduced the dualistic configuration of literature more clearly and concisely than any of his contemporaries'. The dualistic view of literature that he presented with a particular set of language in many ways prepared a path for his contemporaries and followers to valorize abstract, amorphous, and invisible beauty and reinforce the concept of literature, i.e., a linguistic art as a modern, independent form of knowledge that is specific to Japan.

Emphasizing the significance of "the novel that transcribes" (*mosha shōsetsu*) in order for the novel to become a fine art, Futabatei explicates what "transcription" entails as below:

Transcription means to transcribe the realm of the non-real (*kyō*) by borrowing the realm of the real (*jitsu*). As I said before, it is not that those phenomena in the world of the real do not carry the innate idea. Nonetheless, the innate idea cannot be distinctly understood because it is obscured by the contingent form. Phenomena that are transcribed in the novel do hinge upon contingency, of course. However, what the transcriptive novel aims at is to unambiguously transcribe and bring forth the innate idea in the contingent form by means of expressions and structural designs.⁷⁰

70. Futabatei, "Shōsetsu sōron," 43.

Pay attention to how Futabatei is using the dualistic rhetoric—the real (*jitsu*) and the non-real (*kyo*)—to explain the dichotomy of form and idea, and by extension that of the visible and the invisible. While grasping the visible, material world in association with the language of the real, Futabatei correspondingly connects the invisible to the rhetoric of the non-real. According to this logic, "the innate idea" that lies in "the realm of the non-real" becomes visualized and formalized (*arawaru*) through the transcription of "the realm of the real." Remember, Futabatei is arguing that what makes the novel a fine art is its capacity to make visible the invisible, materialize the formless. The invisible that is to be captured in a linguistic art of literature is thus named the non-real.

What is crucial here is that Futabatei is translating a visual experience into a theory of the novel, and that he is doing so specifically by regrasping the visual experience through the dualism of the real and the non-real. As discussed above, the visible had been already rhetoricized as the real before Futabatei began to produce criticism. However, introducing the non-real as a correspondence of the invisible—what exceeds and is more essential than the real—was a rather unique, innovative gesture. This is where Futabatei is distinctly different from his forerunner Tsubouchi and contemporary intellectuals. While many of them shared the same concern about the invisible that is to be visualized in artistic language, Futabatei theorized anew this intellectual interest in literature's capacity by way of his dualistic translation of visibility and invisibility. What lies beyond the visible, reproducible exterior, where the invisible dwells, was designated as the non-real by Futabatei. With the turning up of the real and the non-real as a translation of the visible and the invisible, criticism from here on began to foresee literature almost exclusively from a dualistic perspective.⁷¹

71. This tendency to dualistically conceive literature continued into the twentieth century. Recurring

The dualism of the real and the non-real etymologically signified the ontological state of being and non-being, and its genealogy could be traced back to Chinese classics such as *Zhuangzi*. In Japan, prior to the Meiji period, it was often used in theoretical discussions on writing and performing practices, such as poetry and theater.⁷² As discussed previously, the rhetoric of the real/*jitsu* was used to describe the external, reproducible appearance through the first two decades of the Meiji period.⁷³ The valuing of the real supported by the proliferation of the *jitsu*-compounds, however, invited the downplaying of whatever was considered the non-real/*kyo*, precisely because of their long-standing partnership. How a genre of fiction called "playful writing" (*gesaku*) was belittled by being designated as "false and delusional" (*kyomō*) in the early Meiji period is a good example of the negative connotation assigned to the non-real in reverse proportion to the value attached to whatever was considered the real.⁷⁴ Tsubouchi too was no exception in using the non-real with an unfavorable register.⁷⁵ Futabatei's translation of the invisible into the rhetoric of the non-real, specifically in the sense of its inarguable primacy over the real, was thus a progressive move by itself.

controversies on the so-called "I-novel," the relationship between "politics and literature," the identity of "national literature," for instance, could be considered to be varied manifestations of the dualistic configuration of literature.

72. Togawa Shinsuke, "Sōjitsuron o megutte, kyōjitsuron to sōjitsuron" (Regarding the *Sō-jitsu* Theory: the *Kyō-jitsu* Theory and the *Sō-jitsu* Theory), *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kyōzai no kenkyū* (*National Literature: Studies of Interpretation and Materials*) 33, no.7 (June, 1988): 67.

73. In addition to the word's association with the truth value, the rhetoric of the real/*jitsu* was used to point to "practicality" and especially favored in the first two decades of the Meiji period. "Practical learning" called *jitsugaku* was very popular in early Meiji. To see how *jitsugaku* was valorized, see Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Gakumon no susume* (*An Encouragement of Learning*), published between 1872–1876.

74. See news entry, "Kanagaki Robun Jōno Arindo [Saigiku], Kyōbushō e sashidashitaru shomen no ryaku" ("Summary of the Document that Kanagaki and Jōno Submitted to the Ministry of Religion"), *Shinbun zasshi* 52 (July, 1872): 6–7.

75. Tsubouchi uses *kyo* in the sense of "false" (as in *kyomō* [delusion], *kyokō* [fictional construction]) in many occasions. See the section on "Jidai shōsetsu no kyakushoku" ("Staging the Historical Novel") in *Shōsetsu shinzui*, 36–41.

"Transcribing the realm of the non-real by borrowing the realm of the real": The invisible non-real that lies beyond the formal appearance can be still reached and realized through the visible real. In its radical schematization and rhetoricization, Futabatei's "Shōsetsu sōron" made a landmark as a criticism of literature. Futabatei verbally gave authority to the invisible non-real. He did so in such a concise, schematic manner that his theory forestalled overt disapproval from his fellow intellectuals. Some scholarship from later periods called Futabatei's theorization of literature as a failed attempt to understand Hegelian philosophy that was transmitted via Belinsky.⁷⁶ However, what is ground-breaking is that Futabatei did comprehend the concept of a linguistic art through the dualistic framework and ultimately named the essence of literature, the invisible, as the non-real. As Japanese literature scholar Indra Levy suggests, Futabatei's theory preemptively provided a new ordering of vocabularies to conceive and discuss literature as a linguistic art.⁷⁷

Taking Futabatei's dualism as a decisive juncture point, many intellectuals began to conceptualize literature in a dualistically schematized framework. Multiple debates were triggered throughout their attempts to theorize literature. Though a dualistic conception itself was not removed out of the picture, how it is rhetoricized was subject to change through the debating processes. The revised dualism then further repeated the idiosyncrasy of aesthetic nature of literature in contrast to other forms of knowledge such as science, while emphasizing the independency of Japan's own literature. The following chapter focuses on the "Literature and Nature" debate ("Bungaku to shizen" *ronsō*) that fortified the

76. While having a high opinion of Futabatei's translative negotiation, Togawa Shinsuke insinuates that "Shōsetsu sōron" was an over-manipulated transposition of Belinsky's art theory. Togawa, *Futabatei Shimeiron*, 150–176.

77. Levy maintains Futabatei's writing practices at that time exemplify the making of a new language in Japanese. Levy, *Sirens of the Western Shore*, 34.

aestheticization and transcendentalization of literature in Japan. While investigating how and in what rhetoric criticism proceeded that, this chapter also aims at contemplating the position of criticism in relation to what it is stating about literature.

CHAPTER THREE

Criticism's Self-referentiality: The Case of the "Literature and Nature" Debate

Criticism tried to foresee literature yet to come. In January 1889, one Japanese military doctor provided a prescription for novel writers with regard to how the novel ought to be written. Briefing how French writer Zola employed in his novel production physician Claude Bernard's theories on "observation and experimentation," this Japanese doctor argued that "facts" produced as a result of "analyses and dissection" merely offered "good ingredients" for novels and should not constitute novels themselves. The methodology of Zola as a representative "naturalist writers" (*shizen-ha*) was accordingly rejected for its lack of "the idea" (*ideāru*). In this medical practitioner's logic, "nature" is made synonymous to "facts" that become available through scientific methodologies, and positioned oppositional to "the idea." "Facts" vs. "the idea": When "facts" are made equal to what is observable from outside, "the idea" is brought into relation to what is unobservable from the exterior, and as the invisible that still needs to be contained in literature.

This prescription, titled "Shōsetsuron" ("The Theory of the Novel") and framed as criticism, was offered and signed by "Medical Doctor, Mori Rintarō."⁷⁸ Doctor Mori, who had just returned from his government-sponsored four-year research trip in Germany, placed much emphasis on how the novel ought to enclose the unseeable idea within itself. Now best known as writer "Mori Ōgai," one of the most canonized literary figures in the history of modern Japanese literature, Mori Ōgai/Rintarō was launching his hybrid career as a doctor-writer with this prescriptive vision of literature's idea. Although it has long been the norm in the contemporary scholarly world to refer to this doctor-writer as "Mori Ōgai," I

78. Mori Rintarō, "Shōsetsuron," *Yomiuri shinbun* (January 3, 1889), Appendix 1.

wish to retain the hybridity of his career and avoid weighing one profile over the other. Therefore I follow Thomas LaMarre's scholarship and refer to this doctor-writer by his last name "Mori."⁷⁹

Beginning with his "Shōsetsuron," Mori in the late 1880s to the early 1890s produced multiple theoretical essays and continuously made an effort to separate "facts" from "the idea," "nature" from "literature," "science" from "aesthetics"/"fine arts," and the visible from the invisible. By severing these categories from each other, Mori ultimately brought forward a conception of literature as an incarnation of "the beautiful idea" that is absolute and unchangeable. The existence of "the idea," rhetorically put in close association with "beauty" as literature's primary constituent, was then becoming naturalized throughout intellectual discussions in the following years. The investigation into Mori's almost obsessive gesture to polarize these categories illuminates the ways in which criticism facilitated the aestheticization and absolutization of literature.

My previous discussions examined how criticism posited the realm of the invisible, while attempting to define literature's boundaries from an alleged distance. In this chapter, I wish to draw our attention to criticism's relationship to itself, and examine how the premise of the invisible in literature became exhibited in theoretical discussions about literature. Through my analyses, I intend to highlight a crucial question of how criticism positioned itself against its own claim on literature. Criticism predicated and naturalized the existence of the invisible that is to be visualized in literature. Such a gesture made by criticism prompts a series of questions: Does this imply that criticism was entirely exempted from

79. The predominance of Mori's literary career as "Mori Ōgai" coincides with the under-exploration of his contributions as medical doctor "Mori Rintarō." LaMarre's attention to Mori's medical writing intervenes in such a scholarly tendency. LaMarre, "Bacterial Cultures and Linguistic Colonies: Mori Rintarō's Experiments with History, Science, and Language," *Positions* 6, no.3 (Winter, 1998): 597–635.

literature's mission to make visible the invisible?; When criticism posited the invisible linguistically through the surface of paper upon which it was transcribed, what is it that criticism was visualizing (or obscuring, in-visualizing), in that material space? By focusing on the "Literature and Nature" debate ("Bungaku to shizen" *ronsō*), a controversy between Mori Ōgai/Rintarō and journalist Iwamoto Yoshiharu that revolved around what literature as a linguistic medium should bring into being, this chapter investigates the interplay of visibility and invisibility, made visible in criticism.

On the spatial surface of written criticism, this debate exhibits an exemplary process through which literature became deprived of possibilities of turning into something other than an aesthetic object of fine arts. In addition, unpacking their discussion requires a thinking of the middle ground of criticism and literature—when and where the distinction between them becomes salient, or rather vague. When modern Japanese literature was set in motion specifically by the language of criticism that insisted on the individuation of literature, the potential implication of this middle ground is not dismissible.

It is arguable that the debate over Iwamoto Yoshiharu's essay "Bungaku to shizen" ("Literature and Nature") unfolded as part of Mori's multiple attempts to reconfigure literature's boundaries independently of tangible, observable facts. "Bungaku to shizen" came out in April 1889 through *Jogaku zasshi* (*The Women's Magazine*), for which Iwamoto was serving the chief editor. This essay strongly proclaims what literature is and what it should not be as a type of fine arts in the following manner:

The most enormous literature is that which transcribes nature the way it is.

The extremely beautiful fine arts would never be accompanied by immorality.⁸⁰

Through these statements, Iwamoto was obviously trying to intervene in contemporary discourses surrounding literature. One of those discursive trends includes an essay written by Tokutomi Sohō, chief editor of then influential journal *Kokumin no tomo* (*The Nation's Friend*), who argued that literary tastes could be situationally "manufactured."⁸¹ Iwamoto contradicted this by stating that nothing could be "manufactured" out of a vacuum.

Iwamoto's writing was also engaging in a morally-charged controversy on whether or not performance in theater could be distinguished from real life. While leading critic Ishibashi Ningetsu underlined that playing a role of a prostitute in theater would not affect negatively the actor's morale in reality, Iwamoto counter-argued that things that were not beautiful in actuality would not turn into beauty when represented in the art form.⁸²

Although neither Sohō nor Ningetsu directly responded to Iwamoto, his "Bungaku to shizen" gained traction, perhaps unexpectedly, from another intellectual figure. Shortly after the essay came out, doctor-writer Mori published "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu" ("Reading 'Literature and Nature'") and thoroughly contradicted two theses on literature and fine arts that Iwamoto proposed.⁸³ Negating Iwamoto's formulation of a linguistic art, Mori

80. Iwamoto Yoshiharu, "Bungaku to shizen," *Jogaku zasshi* 159 (April 27, 1889): 10. The actual title of this essay is "*Kokumin no tomo* dai yonjūhachi gō: Bungaku to shizen" ("The 48th Issue of *The Nation's Friend*: Literature and Nature"). I use the abbreviated title for this dissertation.

81. Tokutomi Sohō, "Genron no fujiyū to bungaku no hattatsu" ("Unfreedom of Speech and Development of Literature"), *Kokumin no tomo* 48 (April 22, 1889): 1.

82. Ishibashi Ningetsu, "*Jiji shinpō* to *Jogaku zasshi* ni tadasu" ("Question to *Jiji shinpō* and *Jogaku zasshi*"), *Kokumin no tomo* 48 (April 22, 1889): 33.

83. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," *Kokumin no tomo* 50 (May 11, 1889): 18–22.

Kobori Keiichirō's study examines how Mori's "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu" owed itself to German writer Gottschall's *Poetik*. It is certainly important to know what kind of readings informed the ways in which Mori conceptualized literature. However, I do not intend to repeat a hackneyed "Western influence on Japan" narrative here. This influence model often posits "the West" as something whole and intact and repeatedly

advocated his own prescription of literature that is rooted in the notion of one and sole "beauty." Mori then drew a conclusion: "Beauty" is not identical to "nature," because "beauty" becomes materialized "when the fire of 'the idea' burns off bits of dusts attached to 'nature,'" through the process called "*transubstantiation*" ("*Transsubstantiation*").⁸⁴ Despite Iwamoto's rebuttal, the discussion soon became mired in finding fault with each other's vocabularies, only to be brought to an end without any clear closing. Important questions, such as one that Iwamoto posed to Mori asking about what lies at the center of Mori's concept of "beauty" in literature, remained untouched.⁸⁵

In contemporary scholarship, the "Literature and Nature" debate has often been considered Mori's indisputable victory over Iwamoto.⁸⁶ It is undeniable that the former demonstrated much more preciseness and theoretical rigor in his logic compared to the latter. Because of that appearance, this polemic tended to be historicized as a clash between "logical Mori and emotional Iwamoto," "the new and the old," "modernity and tradition," or "the refined West and backward Japan," in many of the scholarly works.⁸⁷ However,

positions anything "non-Western" as latecomers. Resultantly the hierarchy between "the West" and "the Rest" remains unquestioned. Kobori, *Wakaki hi no Mori Ōgai* (*Mori Ōgai in His Young Days*) (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppansha, 1969), 389–407.

84. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 22.

85. Iwamoto, "*Kokumin no tomo dai gojū gō ni okeru 'Bungaku to shizen o yomu' o kindokusu*" ("Respectfully Reading 'Reading 'Literature and Nature' in *Kokumin no tomo*'s 50th Issue"), *Jogaku zasshi* 162 (May 18, 1889): 17.

86. Ogawa Taketoshi characterizes Iwamoto as a "naïve romanticist" for the latter's belief in the equation of "nature" and ethics. Ogawa, "Rakochō ronsō kara bungaku to shizen ronsō e: sōjitsuron no ikkan toshite" ("From the Naked Kochō debate to the 'Bungaku to shizen' debate"), *Bungei kenkyū* 38 (1978): 82. Chiba Shinrō misinterprets Iwamoto's "nature" as "plain realism" (*sobokuna shajitsushugi*) based on mimesis. Such a reading of Iwamoto's "nature" is based on simple acceptance of Mori's rhetorical manipulation. Chiba, *Ishibashi Ningetsu kenkyū: hyōden to kōshō* (*Ishibashi Ningetsu Studies*) (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 2006), 182.

Although noting the difference between Iwamoto's "nature" and Mori's, Togawa Shinsuke still places accusatory emphasis on Iwamoto's naiveté. Togawa, "*Dorama*," "*takai*": *Meiji nijūnendai no bungaku jōkyō* ("*Drama*" and "*Other World*") (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1987), 149.

87. Intellectual historian Julia Thomas argues:

From Iwamoto's perspective, literary expression is not a discipline but a direct revelation of nature,

rendering this kind of bipolar reading is always followed by the risk of flattening what the debate involved and producing a reductive historical narrative that is often premised on the notion of simple, linear progression of time.

In my observation, the scholarly tendency of dismissing Iwamoto and prioritizing Mori seems to have something to do with many scholars' almost voluntary dispelling of how the debate is rhetorically staged. They do not seem to question, hence perpetuating the formula that Mori was proposing: literature is an "aesthetic" object, independent of other forms of knowledge. It may be too schematic to readily connect this tendency to the infinite longing for (the origin of) a modern national literature, and yet, I believe it is still worth while to entertain why only a certain facade of Mori—Mori as a solid advocate of the autonomy of aesthetic literature in Meiji Japan—has been almost fetishistically featured in scholarly writings until recently.

Such an academic inclination only leads to further reinforcement and naturalization of a certain vision of literature that was still amorphous when it was just one out of many proposals made regarding literature's boundaries at the time of the debate. Even though Mori isolated literature by rhetorically severing it from its potential contaminants such as science, there is no need for his readers to be bound by his move. I wish to challenge such a general trend of scholarly narratives on Mori by centralizing my discussion on how Mori and Iwamoto similarly conceptualized literature around the concept of the invisible, how

particularly nature in the sense of the author's unmediated emotions and experiences. Iwamoto was attempting, as linguist Yanabu Akira points out, to construct a particularly Japanese style of *shizen* against the Western-style definitions used by his opponent in the debate, Mori Ōgai.

Thomas's interpretation is problematic, not only because she equates Iwamoto's "nature" to immediacy, but because she disregards the performative aspect of the debate and holds up the binary between "Japanese" and "Western." Julia A. Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 171.

they differently named the invisible, and in what manner their common ground became obfuscated throughout the debate. This approach should afford new ways to contemplate the division between criticism and literature that was claimed at the nascent stage of the establishment of modern Japanese literature.

What is crucial is that, although the exchange between Mori and Iwamoto seems to stage a conflict, they had a common ground upon which they were envisioning literature yet to be realized. Making visible the invisible: Literature for both Iwamoto and Mori was a medium that brings the invisible in front of one's eyes, represents it in a linguistic hence material form, and enables readers to have physical access to it. Indeed, what each of them envisaged as essential characterization of literature through such terms as "nature" and "beauty" was not compatible with one another. Nonetheless, their addresses never questioned literature's mission as a medium to visualize the invisible. To consider their positions in the debate antithetical to each other is thus to disregard the assumption that they had in common and thereby carelessly embrace what such a discussion itself was both consciously and unwittingly initiating. Therefore, it is necessary to remember that the controversy between Iwamoto and Mori was not just aggressive exchanges of opinions; it also provided a space of inscribing, carving out a niche for the invisible that is to be visualized in literature, regardless of whether it is referred to as "nature" or "beauty," and naturalizing that function of literature.

No less important is that, while obfuscating what they had in common, their interaction simultaneously foregrounded the limit of criticism—criticism that could not maintain the self-claimed distance from what it evaluates. Throughout the debate, criticism, Mori's in particular, literally disclosed what it can verbalize and what it cannot explicate. In so doing, it became possessed by the latter, turned into an inevitable hybrid of what it says

and what it does not, and ended up revealing the impossibility of criticism as the meta-language that would supposedly exceed other modes of writing.

While offering his strict prescription of literature from the seemingly adversarial position to Iwamoto, Mori effaces the possibility to engage in a generative dialogue with the latter. Mori accomplishes this through his rigorous rhetorical moves: first by manipulating Iwamoto's rhetoric of "nature" and secondly by defamiliarizing and reorganizing the linguistic order around which literature is configured at that time. In his argumentation, it is possible to witness how the very language he uses to highlight his literary vision concurrently hides the meeting point with his opponent.

The difference in their terminology to a large degree helped obscure the commonality underlying what each of them painted as literature. While Iwamoto defined his literature by associating it with "nature," Mori mobilized "beauty" and set it as what needs to manifest through the surface of literature. Such terms as "nature" and "beauty" were rather unstable signifiers at this historical point in Japan, in that they did not have referents upon which anybody would unquestionably agree.⁸⁸ Although Iwamoto's "nature" and Mori's "beauty" appear far apart from each other, these two come remarkably close in terms of their innate invisibility and believed visualizability through written language. Nonetheless, as I demonstrate shortly, Mori's arduous rhetorical acrobatics foreclosed a possibility to generate a dialog between Iwamoto's "nature" and his "beauty." As a

88. Yanabu Akira, *Hon'yakugo seiritsu jijō*. See Chapters 4 and 7.

consequence, the invisible quality to which both Iwamoto's "nature" and Mori's "beauty" pointed was never given a chance to intersect.⁸⁹

In his discussion of literature, Iwamoto is clearly not thinking of "nature" as in the sense of perceptible objects and phenomena. What underlies Iwamoto's vision of literature is a strong drive to qualitatively define literature through the term "nature," as his "nature" is rendered several traits that are simultaneously divine, ethical, and aesthetic. His evocation of "spirit" and "*Geist*" in "nature,"⁹⁰ his rephrasing of "nature" as "great teacher" and "enormous ideal,"⁹¹ his Emersonian belief in the trinity of truth, goodness, and beauty⁹² altogether confirm how his "nature" has little to do with "external form."⁹³ Iwamoto's "nature," which is to be transcribed in literature, concerns less with the mere description of exteriority, but is pointing toward an intangible, immaterial, and invisible quality that he believes is innate in what appears on the exterior.

To be sure, Iwamoto had a good reason to emphasize the qualitative aspect of literature at that time. Just about when Iwamoto and his fellow Christians were attempting to legitimize a newly-rising field of women's education in the late 1880s, a strong negative campaign against female students and their educators was about to be set in motion.⁹⁴ The

89. That the commonality of their visions of literature has remained undiscussed in the scholarly world is one manifestation of the sanctification of "Mori Ōgai," the literary figure.

90. Iwamoto, "*Kokumin no tomo dai gojū gō ni okeru 'Bungaku to shizen o yomu' o kindokusu*," 15.

91. Ibid., 16.

92. Iwamoto, "Shizen sūhaisha no kotae" ("The Answer from the Nature-Worshipper"), *Jogaku zasshi* 165 (June 8, 1889): 30. With regard to the trinity of truth, goodness, and beauty, Iwamoto is most likely drawing on Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature."

93. Iwamoto, "*Kokumin no tomo dai gojū gō ni okeru 'Bungaku to shizen o yomu' o kindokusu*," 15. When Mori contradicted Iwamoto's theory, such qualities as the ethical and the religious were also pushed out of the range of aesthetic literature that Mori was advocating.

94. That Iwamoto belonged to a particular type of former-samurai class, namely, *bakushin* that directly served the Tokugawa government, should not be dismissed. That is, he was on the loser's side during the drastic political transition from the downfall of the Tokugawa regime to the inauguration of the Meiji government.

Meiji Girl's School and *Jogaku zasshi* (*The Women's Magazine*), both started in the same year of 1885 as a major landmark of the progress of women's education with an effort of Iwamoto and his friends, easily turned into a target of the attack.⁹⁵ One crucial factor that triggered the backlash against women's education was repetitive depictions of morally corrupt young women in a particular genre of fictional works, ones that were often called and circulated as "novels that capture the real" (*shajitsu shōsetsu*).⁹⁶ In other words, strident censure of female students that began to surface in news media, such as *Yomiuri shinbun*, was reverberating with the popularity of such fictional works.⁹⁷ Iwamoto, as a representative

Despite their resistance, the former-samurai was gradually reorganized under a different social order with the Emperor at its top in the Meiji regime.

Naturally, *bakushin* did not have advantage in pursuing career in the political arena where the winning team was exclusively dominating. Without a socio-political structure and connections that could support him, what Iwamoto could make use of was his cultural capital, i.e., access to multiple forms of knowledge such as training in classical Chinese texts and reading materials produced in Euro-American languages. Women's education emerged as a realm where Iwamoto could reclaim a position that locates "outside," but is still compatible with, politics. Viewed from this perspective, Iwamoto's investment in women's education could be considered as a loser's political struggle for revival, as cultivation of the field in which he could valorize himself.

95. The Meiji Girl's School and *Jogaku zasshi* formed a mutually strengthening relationship. The journal created readership, while the School physically embodied the space where readers could gather. As such, Iwamoto's projects altogether helped create a certain type of literacy community, one that strongly connected women's education and Christianity, in the Meiji society.

Female students came to have a larger public profile after higher education for women began to be institutionalized in the 1870s and featured by such mediums as *Jogaku zasshi* from the 1880s. In fact, the first few issues of *Jogaku zasshi* include entries about how to arrange *sokuhatsu* ("Western hairdos") with detailed visual explanation. This is indicative of a semiotic shift that the journal was instigating so as to present the figure of young, modern, and literate women in a visually accessible way to readers. The rise of print media played a significant role in facilitating such semiotic shift. Given their iconicity, i.e., certain hairdos and fashion, female students, often highly gendered and sexualized, made a great topic in periodicals to increase readership.

96. Examples include Ozaki Kōyō's *Fūryū kyōningyō* (*Elegant Kyoto Doll*, serialized in *Garakuta bunko* [*The Library of Rubbish Heap*] from May 1888 to March 1889) and Saganoya Omuro's *Kusaretamago* (*Rotten Egg*, appeared in *Miyako no hana* [*Flowers of the Capital*] in February 1889). The term *shajitsu shōsetsu* at that time was particularly associated with another genre of fiction, *ninjō shōsetsu* (novels about human emotions), that frequently thematized troubled romance of young women. The Ken'yūsha School with which Ozaki Kōyō was affiliated was the active producer of so-called *shajitsu/ninjō shōsetsu*.

The somewhat interchangeable relationship between *shajitsu* and *ninjō* needs attention. The word *shajitsu* in the late 1880s in the scene of fiction-writing cannot be simply equated to mimetically capturing reality, as it typically pointed to descriptions of human emotions (*ninjō*) that are unbound by the didactic plot structure.

97. *Yomiuri shinbun*, in particular, set off their first accusatory campaign in 1889, publishing such news

figure in the field of women's education, was in urgent need of responding to that sort of negative discursive forces.⁹⁸ When Iwamoto problematized elsewhere novels that promise to "capture the real" and yet communicate no clear "viewpoints," he was explicitly taking issue with the particular practice of fiction-writing that only focuses on young women's scandals under the respectable name of literature.⁹⁹ What Iwamoto needed in order to undo a public image attached to those who take part in women's education was literature that is antithetical to a specific kind of fiction—one that only details young women's vulgar gossip. The necessity to argue for the moral, qualitative aspect of literature derived from this socio-political landscape surrounding the young generations at that time.

articles as "Joseito no hinkō" ("Morals of Female Students"), "Jogakkō no akuhyō" ("Bad Rumors about Girl's School"), and so forth. Resultantly, fiction and news reports synergistically began to create figures of reproachable young women.

Kuroda Shuntarō argues that *Yomiuri shinbun* carried out their negative campaign against female students in the format of *tsuzukimono* (serialized reports), which presented the campaign the information trustworthy. Despite their unreliability, scandalous narratives as *tsuzukimono* made readers discover "facts" that had never existed. Kuroda, "Yomiuri shinbun ni okeru 'shinbun shōsetsu' no hensei katei: Meiji nijūnen zengo, Shōyō no shikō to ishi no yukue" ("The Formation Process of Newspaper Novels in *Yomiuri shinbun*"), *Geibun kenkyū* (*Journal of Arts and Letters*) 9 (December, 2007): 10–16.

According to Yagi Mizuho, the term "kusaretamago" transgressed the boundary of Saganoya's individual work *Kusaretamago* and was used more broadly as a metaphor for deteriorated morality of people involved in women's education. Yagi, "Jogaku zasshi o shiza toshita Meiji nijūnen no bungaku ronsō: Joshikyōikukai no moraru fuhai o meguru dōjidaigensetsu tonō kōsaku" ("Debates about Literature in the 22nd year of Meiji, Viewed from *Jogaku zasshi*"), *Kindai bungaku shiron* 35 (December, 1997): 1–12.

98. This is off my discussion point, but I mention here the paradox entailed in Iwamoto's defense of women's education; the more he defends female students, the more he objectifies and encloses them into a particular mold. While sticking up for female students, Iwamoto still postulates that women need to and can be put under control. This attitude can be observed in the fact that Iwamoto never questions the simple equation of "immorality" to female students' sexual transgression, despite that there could be many other forms of immorality. He ultimately underlines the gender binary that he thinks he is rectifying by regarding female students as a (sexually) controllable object.

99. Iwamoto, "Shōsetsuka no chakugan" ("Novel-writers' Viewpoints"), *Jogaku zasshi* 154 (March 23, 1889): 1–5.

Iwamoto also criticizes *Kusaretamago* very harshly, saying that the work "entirely poisoned the air of the world of literature." Iwamoto, "Bunshōjō no risō" ("Ideals in Writings"), *Jogaku zasshi* 152 (March 9, 1889): 4–5.

Iwamoto's essay "Bungaku to shizen" was conceived when "capturing the real" very specifically pointed to young women's scandals.¹⁰⁰ However, instead of grappling squarely with the chastising discourse that perpetuates the linking of women's education and immorality, Iwamoto's essay takes an alternative course in order to promote what literature needs to verbalize. "Nature" as rhetoric is being mobilized to serve this specific counter function that aims to undo the widespread negativity surrounding women's education. Expressed through the word "nature," Iwamoto's literature is posited as an incarnation of the divine, aesthetic, and ethical quality all at once.

However, such highly qualitative characteristics of Iwamoto's "nature" becomes utterly distorted when Mori elevates another invisible quality "beauty" as a core essence of literature. In his fierce correspondences with Iwamoto, Mori delineates the difference between truth, goodness, and beauty, and respectively classifies them under science, ethics, and poetics. Mori then forcibly imposes the sense of scientifically accessible "facts" and "phenomena" on Iwamoto's "nature," likens this "nature" to a trend of European novelists' "poetic naturalism" that is practiced based on scientific "observation and experimentation,"

100. In fact, Iwamoto's vocabularies around *jitsu*/the real at this time—*jissai* (later substituted with *riaru* or "real"), *jissaiha* (writers who focus on *jissai*), or *jissō* (facade of *jitsu*)—became closely associated with young women's scandals. That is, in his repudiation of the association between *jitsu*/the real and promiscuous women, he was still buying into it.

A few month after the controversy over "Bungaku to shizen," Iwamoto took issue with the narrowness of the world depicted in the *jissai*-faction's fictional works that repeatedly represented young women's transgression. Surprisingly, Iwamoto argued: "the point (of the novel) is not necessarily to transcribe nature as it is, *jissai* as it is." Clearly he associated this "nature" with "*jitsu*" this time, as if he had completely reversed what he said in "Bungaku to shizen." This is indicative of how unstable these terms were in his time. Iwamoto, "Shōsetsuron ryaku" ("The Abridged Theory of the Novel"), *Jogaku zasshi* 177 (August 31, 1889): 5.

The ambiguity of Iwamoto's words was soon attacked and triggered another controversy, involving such critics as Uchida Roan. For further details, see Roan, "'Shōsetsuron ryaku' shitsugi" ("Questions about 'Summary of the Theory of the Novel'"), *Jogaku zasshi* 179 (September 14, 1889).

repudiates Iwamoto's "nature"-based perspective of literature, so as to valorize "beauty" in contrast. Mori writes:

Zola borrowed the scientific method that pursues "nature" with observation and experimentation, and applied it to aesthetic literature. Its details are described in "Shōsetsuron," an essay that I contributed to *Yomiuri shinbun* for the first time. . . . However, "nature" that can be pursued by way of observation and experimentation is "facts." To be satisfied with acquiring "facts" is science, not fine arts.¹⁰¹

Pay attention to such words as "observation," "experimentation," "facts," "science" that are placed in association with "nature." These words in Mori are altogether positioned antagonistic to "aesthetic literature" and "fine arts." Mori is taking issue with the situation in which Zolaist naturalism is rather coming close to science and yet still circulating as literary arts. Evidently, Mori's problematization of Zolaist naturalism alone has no relation to Iwamoto's discussion on literature at all. Despite that, Iwamoto's "nature" is brought into discussion and fused with "poetic naturalism," which, according to Mori, French writer Zola's "scientific method" of literary production exemplifies.

Mori's effort to separate "science" from "aesthetic literature," from "fine arts" at that time is definitely not an isolated one. For instance, about a year prior to the "Literature and Nature" debate, Futabatei Shimei translated Russian Schellingian scholar Mikhail G. Pavlov's essay and published it under the title "Gakujutsu to bijutsu no sabetsu" ("On the Distinction between Sciences and Arts").¹⁰² That both Futabatei's translation and Mori's

101. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 21–22.

102. Mori and Pavlov via Futabatei come very close to each other in terms of how they associate art with the immaterial/idea, science with the material/form. Pavlov/Futabatei writes, while sciences begin by dealing with visible existence in order to reach ideas, "art transforms ideas into objects" and "transforms things with non-real spirits (*kyorei*) into those with concrete existence (*jitsuzai*)." Note Futabatei's recourse to the rhetoric of the non-real and the real (*kyo-jitsu*). Pavlov, "Gakujutsu to bijutsu no sabetsu," trans. Futabatei Shimei, *Kokumin no tomo* 19 (April 6, 1888): Appendix 7–11.

initial response to Iwamoto's essay appeared in aforementioned widely-respected journal *Kokumin no tomo* (*The Nation's Friend*) demonstrates how the division of intellectual practices, and by extension the formation and production of knowledge itself, was of great concern to many young intellectuals at that time.

Certainly, such an intellectual concern was very much in tandem with a larger socio-political, modernization movement in force at the time. In many ways, it is possible to argue that Japan's modernization took a form of the dividing of intellectual labor. The reform of the higher education, for example, proceeded since the 1870s, and Japan's first university was established with four major faculties—law, science, letters, and medicine—which over the following few decades resulted in the firmer institutionalization of disciplinary divisions and subdivisions.¹⁰³

Here it is beneficial to be reminded of Joseph Murphy's careful observation about the demography of "intellectuals" in and since the Meiji period. Murphy surveys the inception stage of higher education in early Meiji Japan and argues as follows:

Japanese intellectual space from roughly 1890 to 1945 is unique in that the disciplinary divisions of the modern university instituted in the space of a generation along contemporary European lines were inhabited by scholars who retained a corporate/corporeal memory of intellectual work under a different regime of knowledge in the form of Chinese studies. These scholars neither feared the formalization involved in math nor took for granted the immiscibility of knowledge produced by the humanities and the sciences.¹⁰⁴

From this, Murphy maintains that Meiji elites, whose intellectual foundation was deeply rooted in Chinese classics, showed less resistance to interdisciplinary work compared to

103. Amano Ikuo, *Daigaku no tanjō*. See Chapters 2 and 3.

104. Murphy, *Metaphorical Circuit: Negotiations Between Literature and Science in 20th Century Japan* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2003), 4–5.

their Euro-American counterparts. While I do not disagree with Murphy, I wish to offer an additional interpretation. That is, precisely because an *a*-immiscible "regime of knowledge" based on Chinese classics inhabited Meiji elites' minds, they all the more needed to make an effort to disconnect certain practices of intellectual labor from one another. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the rejection of "Chinese-ness" was also in operation in dividing disciplines, both on the infrastructural and discursive levels.

In a sense, Iwamoto's "Bungaku to shizen" provided a convenient platform for Mori to reinscribe what he stressed in "Shōsetsuron": the division between "literature" and "science." When Iwamoto's "nature" was mobilized only to be equated to "scientifically"-obtained "facts," Mori's "beauty" acquired a decent counterpoint against which "aesthetic literature" is linguistically configured anew and fortified. Mori's aggressive manipulation of Iwamoto's "nature" thus brought the former's theory of literature onto a more solidified level. Needless to say, Mori's interpretation is not doing justice to Iwamoto's "nature." Although it is not my intention to delve into why Mori made such an unreasonable move, I stress that Mori's mistreatment of Iwamoto's "nature" had a decisive effect in creating an antagonistic appearance of the debate, ultimately eliminating a prospect of calling attention to the common ground of their visions of literature.

Furthermore, the similarity in their visions—literature as a medium to bring forward the invisible quality—became further obfuscated through the ways in which Mori posited "beauty." Throughout his correspondences with Iwamoto, Mori spent extensive time, space, and labor to characterize this invisible quality called "beauty." In his attempt to vindicate the autonomous idiosyncrasy of "beauty" and its revelation in literature, he made a rather acrobatic move in his rhetoric, intervened into the existing network of language, and revised the linguistic order around which literature was organized.

Mori never really provided clear definitions of his words, which serves as the source of much confusion in understanding what was at stake in the debate. Nonetheless, that does not mean that his language had no impact at all in his time. His rhetorical move pushed and fueled the contemporary discourses on literature, quite the contrary. That being said, I also need to hasten to add that I am not arguing that Mori's rhetoric alone moved the widely circulating vocabularies to discuss literature, nor that Mori needs to be privileged for his word usage. The point is that, when Mori used a certain word in a particular manner, it was received broadly and gradually modified the ways in which that word related to other words, regardless of the user's intention.

To explain the invisible quality of "beauty," Mori introduces the rhetoric of "the idea" (*sō*), a rather untainted vocabulary to converse about literature at that time. He speaks of "the idea" in close relation to "beauty" as follows:

"Beauty" is "the idea," and therefore, it involves no cause, no effect, nor ending. The reason why "beauty" differs from "truth" and "goodness," however, is that it requires an individual "phenomenon" to reveal itself. . . . "Beauty" alone [unlike "truth" and "goodness"] conveys itself in a singular "phenomenon" rendered free and independent.¹⁰⁵

Remember the discourses revolving around the real (*jitsu*) and the non-real (*kyō*)—the dualism that entailed layers of overtones in relation to writing practices from the early Meiji period. Given that background, Mori's mobilization of the rhetoric of "the idea" in association with literature and exclusion of that of "the non-real" is a unique, deliberate, and strategic choice.¹⁰⁶ The insertion of "the idea" certainly engenders a defamiliarizing effect;

105. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 20.

106. The introduction of the rhetoric of "the idea" can be contrasted to aforementioned Futabatei Shimei's mobilization of the the real-non-real dichotomy.

by connecting "beauty" to "the idea" anew, Mori's theory escapes from being subsumed under the tendency of framing literature through the real and the non-real. "The idea" disengages Mori's text from many other discursive attempts to theorize literature, while still providing an alternative way to conceptualize literature.

To reiterate, however, this does not indicate that Mori articulated what he means by "the idea" or "beauty." In fact, Mori's explanation often fell into tautology; what helps "beauty" exist as such is "the idea," and "the idea" manifests itself through "beauty." Regardless of the ambiguity of his words, however, when Mori posited his theory of literature through the rhetoric of "the idea" and "beauty," these words intervened in the existing network of language. As a result, a different linguistic order came to be solicited anew around literature and reconfigured how literature is conceptualized. This mechanism is best exemplified during the debate, when critic Maruyama Michikazu interrupted the exchange between Mori and Iwamoto. Refuting Mori, Maruyama writes:

Mori in the fifty second issue of *Kokumin no tomo* asked for the proof of the trinity of goodness, truth, and beauty. . . . It is Plato who stated that goodness, beauty, and truth would emerge from the idea of goodness, namely, God. . . . It is Baumgarten who regarded truth, beauty, and goodness as a "perfect" phenomenalization of intellect, emotion, and will, respectively. . . . The theory of the trinity has a point. Someone like Hegel especially respected this theory. I too believe that it is clearer and more interesting than Mori's art theory.¹⁰⁷

This statement may look like a simple denunciation of Mori and his theory of literature. On the contrary, Maruyama's rhetoric works in favor of the very person who is under attack. In finding fault with Mori's arguments, Maruyama lists such philosophers as Plato and Hegel as those who grappled with the concept of aesthetics. In so doing, Maruyama inadvertently

107. Maruyama Michikazu, "Mori Rintarō kun ni yokoyari o teisu" ("Interrupting Mr. Mori Rintarō"), *Jogaku zasshi* 166 (June 15, 1889): 19.

situates Mori in the lineage of aesthetic thinkers and endorses Mori's usage of "the idea"/"beauty" in association with literature. In other words, even through the negation of Mori, Maruyama is supporting the new linguistic order by which Mori's theory on literature is being assembled. The names of Plato and other theorists here only function as the further authorization of Mori's theory.

The revising of the linguistic order around which literature is conceived does not only beget a defamiliarizing effect. By additionally positing "beauty"/"the idea" as transcendent and autonomous, Mori's rhetoric operates to dismantle the historicity entailed in discussions revolved around literature. Mori's "beauty"/"the idea" is painted as formless absolute that is "eternally unaffected" and "whole and intact."¹⁰⁸ That is to say, his "beauty"/"the idea" does not accept being confined in regional and temporal specificities. In "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," for example, this manifests in the form of negating "the Orient." While challenging Iwamoto's theory on literature, Mori simultaneously tries to sever Japan from its historical association with "the Orient":

Both Iwamoto and I believe that the Orientals are not exuberant in the artistic mind. . . . "Truth"-oriented Indian learning, merged with "goodness"-oriented Chinese learning, became a component for our country's enlightenment. Precisely because of that, we haven't been able to succeed in rendering an individual "phenomenon" free and independent and reaching "beauty" in each phenomenon in our mind.¹⁰⁹

"Beauty" reveals itself in an single phenomenon. To reach that "beauty," each phenomenon needs to be conceived "free and independent." And yet, the traditions of "Indian"/"truth" learning and "Chinese"/"goodness" learning hinder Japanese people from achieving that.

108.Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 20.

109.Ibid.

Note the connection drawn between "beauty" and "freedom and independence." Mori's statement accuses and rejects traces of the "Oriental" localness, in order to underline the autonomy of "beauty" that Japan immediately needs to accomplish.¹¹⁰

Mori emphasizes the "freedom and independence" of "beauty" in exchange for the erasure of local specificity. This gesture continues to appear in Mori's theory of literature. Soon after the debate with Iwamoto came to an end, Mori speaks of "the beautiful idea" in the following manner:

We believe that all forms of poetry that take beauty for their purpose do not necessarily ask whether the form is prose or verse, and that they need to have the beautiful idea at their core, Viewed from the poetic or aesthetic standpoint, beauty has to be one and only. Regardless of whether beauty phenomenalizes in Japanese verse (lyric), Chinese verse (poems), or Western verse, it happens as if one single moon casted its shadow on each river. . . . Both prose and verse alike take the idea (or design) at their core. . . . Although it is difficult to translate verse into prose, conveying beauty through translation is still the same.¹¹¹

Through the example of translation, Mori is demonstrating how eternal and unchangeable "the beautiful idea" is. Regardless of in what form this "idea" is phenomenalized, be it "Japanese," "Chinese," or "Western," or be it "verse" or "prose," its one and soleness cannot be affected. Reaching "the beautiful idea" thus results in the total annihilation of formal differences. As a result, in front of "the beautiful idea," no forms, no phenomena can be hierarchized. Mori's theory of "the beautiful idea" thus coincides with the negation of localness, anything formed, everything visible. Iwamoto's "nature" was fiercely contested as a literature's constituent, because it was (forcibly) aligned with "facts," produced in a specific time and place, hence carrying the trace of localness.

110. The negation of "the Orient" occurs in unison with the centralization of "the West."

111. Mori, "Meiji nijūni-nen hihyōka no shigan," 24–25.

It must not be forgotten that Mori's positing of "beauty"/"the idea" in literature as something universal itself is inevitably marked with historicity. Mori's universalist claim on "beauty"/"the idea" is premised on the denial of formal, hence locally-marked distinctions. And yet, such distinctions are framed as "the Orient" ("Indian" and "Chinese"), "Japanese," and "Western." Even though such a triangular framing is nothing but arbitrary, Mori's rigorous rhetorical move made it sound unquestionable, if not inevitable. What is historical is that the concept of localness, and by extension universality, is deduced from this triad, and that Mori's writing was attempting to naturalize this deduction at this moment.¹¹²

Throughout the debate, Mori never provides a concrete example of literature that successfully reveals "the beautiful idea." As a consequence, his theory becomes haunted by ambiguity, failing to exemplify in what form aesthetic literature is actually realized. It is this unaccountability that paradoxically guarantees the universality of literature, in that it evades being identified with a specific, local, hence potentially uncivilized example.

In such a manner, Mori's rhetoric aimed at positing his theory of literature independently of contemporary discourses on literature that are tarnished by local specificities. In so doing, it underlined the difference between his literature and Iwamoto's

112. Mori raises "Japanese," "Chinese," and "Western" so as to cancel formal differences among them. The erasure of "Western" specificity in addition to that of "Chinese" and "Japanese" may look like an egalitarian gesture. And yet, it rather functions reversely as the elevation of the position of "Japan," in that they are "equally" de-specified. Mori's soliciting of "Japanese," "Chinese," and "Western" together on the same ground signals several levels of manipulation. It needs to be remembered that "Chinese" and "Western" were competing corpora of knowledge in his time. Mori's juxtaposition of "Japanese" along with "Chinese" and "Western" suggests that he allows "Japanese" to participate in the intellectual economy as if "Japanese" also constituted an equally influential corpus of knowledge. Under this gesture, that "Japanese" (*Nihon, wabun*) was long positioned vis-à-vis "Chinese" (*Shina, kanbun*) within a larger Sinographic sphere is completely suppressed. In addition, potential complexity and heterogeneity existent in Euro-American countries are erased, and "Western" is brought in as a monolithic unit. In that manner, Mori lists "Japanese," "Chinese," and "Western" as an equally juxtapose-able corpus and constructs a common base upon which to annul specificities and discuss universality. In the sense that universality is conceived through this triad, Mori's text is no less clearly engraved with temporal and spatial specificity of Meiji Japan.

I will come back to the point of the claim for literature's universality in Chapter Five that examines the negation of the ideal debate.

and made their concepts of literature appear totally unbridgeable to each other. As a result, the commonality of their visions of literature—literature as a means of visual reproduction, as a medium that confirms an alibi for what is being represented on the flat paper surface—was veiled in the appearance of the debate and slipped out of sight, especially the scholarly sight of those who intended to locate the beginning of modern Japanese literature.

Mori's rhetorical move cultivates literature's boundaries anew, while obfuscating what similarly underlies his vision of literature and Iwamoto's. The ways in which Mori refutes Iwamoto, however, also stage a self-referential demonstration of how criticism, which is claimed to remain external to what it criticizes, possibly works against what it says. That is to say, when distancing itself from existing discourses on literature and singling out his own prescription of literature, Mori's language in the debate simultaneously calls into question its own limit as criticism, the meta-language.

To reject Iwamoto's view on literature thoroughly, Mori employs a distinctive rhetorical pattern. I extensively quote below his multiple theses on a literary art in order to highlight his mode of thinking and expression. Pay attention, less to what he is saying, but to how he is constructing his theses. To begin with, Mori cites Iwamoto's two formulae:

- (1) The most enormous literature is that which transcribes nature the way it is.
- (2) The extremely beautiful fine arts would never be accompanied by immorality.¹¹³

Taking his point of departure in these theses, Mori maps out Iwamoto's usage of literature and beauty and spotlights how Iwamoto is using these terms unstably. Underlining that

113. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 18.

"aesthetic literature" ("*schöne Literatur*"), which is characterized by "beauty," and "scientific literature" ("*wissenschaftliche Literatur*"), whose essence is "truth," are independent from each other, Mori develops a derivative hypothesis from Iwamoto's first claim:

(3) The most truthful, scientific literature is that which transcribes nature the way it is.¹¹⁴

Here Mori is replacing the word "enormous" with "truthful, scientific," clarifying what he observes in Iwamoto original logic. And yet, Mori is doing this solely for the purpose of defying the rigidity of this statement. Problematizing the ambiguity of the term "nature" in this third hypothesis, Mori substitutes it with "facts" and proposes the fourth, conclusive thesis:

(4) The most truthful, scientific literature is that which transcribes facts the way they are.¹¹⁵

What was originally a qualitative definition of literature in Iwamoto ("enormous," "nature") is thus gradually but violently converted into a statement on science and facts.

Mori then moves on to examine Iwamoto's second claim on fine arts. Reasoning that "beauty," unlike "truth" or "goodness," involves no cause nor effect, Mori rejects the association that Iwamoto made between fine arts and immorality. Then he revises Iwamoto's statement by saying:

114. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 19.

115. Ibid.

(5) The extremely beautiful fine arts are sometimes accompanied by immorality.¹¹⁶

Following this, Mori develops his logic and poses another hypothesis. This time, he intends to inspect and clarify the relationship between aesthetic literature and nature:

(6) The most beautiful aesthetic literature is that which transcribes nature the way it is.¹¹⁷

Although this statement appears similar to Iwamoto's theses in its form, it is not just a simple rephrasing. What Iwamoto said originally is completely taken into pieces and reassembled by Mori. Mori then elaborates further to disprove this sixth hypothesis, despite that it never belonged to Iwamoto:

. . . , if Iwamoto is asked how one can express "divine poesy" and "sophistication" by transcribing "nature" the way it is, he probably won't be able to answer. This is because "the idea" that is called "divine poesy" or "sophistication," though it reaches "beauty" by way of "nature," is never "nature" the way it is.¹¹⁸

At one point, Mori is even admitting that Iwamoto's "divine poesy" and "sophistication," which equal to "nature" in Iwamoto's logic, are synonymous to what Mori calls "the idea." And yet, that Iwamoto's "nature" already points to a "divine," "sophisticated" quality is suppressed with its entirety. Mori renders the term "nature" exclusively the sense of "facts," delineating the division between tangible "nature"/"facts" and intangible qualities. After all, what is at stake is not so much an argument on the limit of literature but a rather simple

116. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 21.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

question of how the term "nature" is being used. Nonetheless, Mori's rhetorical move obscures that.

Closing his refutation, Mori poses this final thesis:

(7) The most beautiful aesthetic literature does not generally transcribe nature the way it is.¹¹⁹

What Mori is actually stating and whether or not his reasoning is valid throughout these seven statements matter much less in my discussion. Rather, what I pay attention to the most is the pattern of how Mori contradicts Iwamoto's theses on literature. Mori reconstructs Iwamoto's "nature" as if it was a delegate opinion of Zolaist naturalism—naturalism in the sense of mimesis (*Nachahmung*) based on the scientific acquisition of "facts."¹²⁰ In so doing, Mori uses Iwamoto's "nature" as a counter point against which the autonomy of "beauty"/"the idea" is claimed. In accomplishing these, Mori proposes the falsifiability of Iwamoto's theses, runs hypotheses against them, evaluates the validity of these hypotheses, and in the end entirely disproves them. That none of these hypotheses came from Iwamoto becomes obfuscated through the process thereof. If I borrow Mori's own terms mobilized in "Shōsetsuron," he "observes" and "analyzes" Iwamoto's theses, "dissects" them into pieces, and even "experiments" on them, in order to prove his points. In other words, Mori employs a rather "scientific" methodology to confront Iwamoto, creating the appearance of logical consistency and rigidity in his rhetoric.

Mori's rhetorical pattern to posit "beauty"/"the idea" generates confusion. "Beauty"/"the idea" is rendered independent from "scientifically" accessible "facts." Nonetheless, his

119. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 22.

120. Ibid., 21–22.

language is painting "beauty"/"the idea" precisely through a "scientific" methodology, through what he says is heterogeneous to "beauty"/"the idea." In other words, the delineation of the border between "aesthetic literature" and "scientific literature" hinges upon the very "scientific" manner. The envisioning of literature that embodies "beauty"/"the idea" is conducted exactly through what it is not.

The confusion latent in Mori's language of criticism prompts a series of questions: Does this imply that Mori's language is simply blind to what it states?; Is "beauty"/"the idea" something that can be grasped through what is extraneous to it?; If that is the case, does Mori's theory about "beauty"/"the idea" exclude a possibility to embody "beauty"/"the idea" itself?; After all, where does the language of criticism to engage with "beauty"/"the idea" stand vis-à-vis "beauty"/"the idea" itself, within or outside?

If Mori's language of criticism considers itself to remain external to "beauty"/"the idea," the more strongly Mori emphasizes the autonomy of "beauty"/"the idea," the more "scientific" and "fact"-based his description of "beauty"/"the idea" may become, and therefore, the further away his language may stay distanced from "beauty"/"the idea." Contrarily, if Mori's theory foresees itself somehow incarnating "beauty"/"the idea," his "scientific" methodology betrays such a prediction. Mori's line-drawing between "beauty"/"the idea" and "nature"/"facts," "aesthetics" and "science" engenders uncertainty, which prompts the following question: Could the rupture between "aesthetics" and "science" correspond to the claimed distance between literature and criticism?

Certainly it is possible to consider that, in theorizing literature's boundaries, Mori is creating criticism's objective distance from literature by way of his "scientific" methodology. However, it is also necessary to put on hold such a binary for the time being. To register the division between "aesthetics" and "science" in Mori's criticism is to enact

what Mori's language is rhetorically initiating. These questions raised above are postulated precisely upon the thinking that "aesthetics" and "science" are mutually exclusive, which is a simple reiteration of Mori's schematization.

Aforementioned Thomas LaMarre makes an incisive observation that helps contemplate Mori's rhetorical move in this debate. Indicating that many of Mori's writings reveal the opposite to what Mori's divisive theory emphasizes, LaMarre argues:

In fact, despite his insistence on modern divisions, it is possible to see the real work of Mori Rintarō/Ōgai in terms of a mixture of scientific, social, and literary effects on an unimaginable scale. . . . If we temporarily forestall the urge to assign a hierarchy to these mixes in terms of foreground and background, or dominant and subordinate modes, it is evident that, despite their claims to the contrary, his works are far from separating science, society, and literature. The result is an intensely hybridized mix of facts, power plays, and fictions.¹²¹

If Mori's schematization in part serves as a source of "the urge to assign a hierarchy" to whatever he writes, it is all the more necessary to suspend the division that Mori himself is asserting.

Perhaps this suspension may provide a clue about understanding why scholars at later periods continuously idolized Mori as one of the prototypes of Japan's literary modernity at the expense of effacing Mori's career in science. Mori repeatedly emphasized that there was a conspicuous line between "aesthetics" and "science." That line functioned to delineate the heterogeneity between the two intellectual practices, while ultimately in-

121. LaMarre, "Bacterial Cultures and Linguistic Colonies," 622. In the same essay, LaMarre identifies Mori's attempt to separate categories in "Shōsetsuron" as a marker of the modern:

Since Mori devoted a great deal of effort to conceptualizing the separation of literature and science, it is fair to say that the work of the modern—as a separation of forms of representation that thwarts any attempt to make visible the middle region between political, scientific, and literary representation—begins with him. (621)

visualizing a potential mixture residing in any modes of writing including Mori's own. That is, the limit that Mori himself set during the Meiji period acted upon Japanese literature scholars from later times, stipulating how Mori's own texts are supposed to be approached. Those who had to and were willing to think within the already-drawn line—we may even say, those who wished to cling to the concept of literature as an aesthetic object—were hindered from, or rather gladly stopped seeing the hybridity in Mori's writings. Their excessive focus on Mori's views on "aesthetics," as well as their one-sided oblivion of his works in "science," is, in a sense, preconditioned when Mori fixed a limit between these two intellectual practices.

I am in agreement with LaMarre with regard to how Mori's language constitutes "an intensely hybridized mix." As my closing remark of this chapter, I wish to expand LaMarre's insight and look into how Mori's linguistic "mix" reveals itself and what it is possibly setting in motion.

Let us turn back to how Mori describes the realization process of "beauty"/"the idea" in works of literature. In his closing note of "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," Mori theorizes the process as follows:

"Beauty" becomes realized when the fire of "the idea" burns off bits of dusts attached to "nature." "Beauty" is already formed in "fantasy," shouting that it needs its body back. What allows "beauty" to reclaim its physicality is "fine arts." . . . Fine arts "manufacture." "Manufacturing" is exactly where "beauty" differs from "nature." This process is called "transubstantiation."¹²²

Mori's essays produced around the time spend much of their space to polarize the world into what is visible/material ("nature," "facts," "science") and what is invisible/immaterial

122. Mori, "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu," 22.

("beauty," "the idea," "aesthetics"). What bridges two poles is, according to Mori, "fine arts." Then he calls the "manufacturing" process of "beauty," "transubstantiation." That Mori specifically assigns a phoneticized Japanese reading ("*toransuzupusutanchiachion*") to the original German word shows his strong investment in this term.

Theoretically speaking, "transubstantiation" points to the perfect harmonization of visibility/materiality and invisibility/immateriality. The "trans-" part of "transubstantiation" is particularly important, given the repeatedly emphasized heterogeneity of the two intellectual dimensions. "Trans-" provides the middle ground, mediating "nature"/"facts"/"science" and "beauty"/"the idea"/"aesthetics." It points to a traversing motion between two otherwise incompatible realms, a movement through which the invisible/immaterial becomes "substantiated" in the visible/material form.

On the practical level, however, a question still lingers: How is this "trans-" expressed in words, in Mori's own "scientific" methodology? If what he calls "scientific" is based on "observation and experimentation," and, if his theory of literature as a type of fine arts is constructed with highly "scientific" language, how does he "scientifically" describe his understanding of the "trans-" movement in his criticism that theorizes literature? The productivity of what Mori raises as literature hinges upon the enactment of what he identifies as "transubstantiation." Despite that, Mori's criticism unfortunately never ventures into the "scientific" clarification of the process of bridging the two realms, leaving "trans-" entirely unexplained. Mori's "scientific" language that is mobilized in his criticism thus reveals its own limit in its unaccountability for "trans—"—what it positions as the essential path to achieving "beauty"/"the idea."

Mori rhetorically generates the division between "aesthetics" and "science" and mobilizes the methodology that he categorizes as the latter to delineate literature as an

"aesthetic" object, as a linguistic art. In so doing, however, he avoids detailing the crucial movement of "trans-" thorough which "nature"/"facts" becomes reconciled with "beauty"/"the idea." The middle ground is never foregrounded nor verbalized, and remains as a vacuum that hopelessly floats between these two poles. Mori's criticism is structured in such a way that the division he is instituting between "aesthetics" and "science" is all the more emphasized, reconfirmed, and enacted by way of its own unfolding. The result is a further polarization of these intellectual practices.

However, this in a sense also means that Mori's criticism succeeds in pointing to the other-dimensionality of "aesthetics" as the inexplicable, the ungraspable through "scientific" language. Exactly in the absence of the exhibition of "trans-," i.e., the reaching beyond the "scientific," his "scientific" language of criticism highlights the realm of "the beautiful idea" and simultaneously becomes cohabited by that. When LaMarre speaks of "an intensely hybridized mix" latent in Mori's writings, he is referring to "facts, power plays, and fictions" that are made visible on paper. Perhaps it is feasible to incorporate into this "mix" an invisible factor: the unverbalized, or unverbalizable process of "trans-."

By remaining on the "scientific" side, Mori's writing secures the autonomy of "aesthetics." Precisely by not verbalizing the crucial traversing movement between them, his criticism becomes transformed into a "mix," a composure of divided categories that it is asserting and activating itself and of the invisible middle ground lying between them. The disciplinary divisions of which Mori took part in laying the foundation became reified through scholarly discourses and the institution of education, and continued to conceal this "mix," the median space enacted in Mori's own criticism.

Where is criticism located vis-à-vis what it says about literature? Let us return to this initial question and reflect on how the criticism produced around the "Literature and Nature" debate related to its own claim about literature. Iwamoto's theses on literature and Mori's enthusiastic engagement with them reveal how their conceptions of literature were premised on the (mate)realization of invisible, formless qualities. The defamiliarization effect that Mori's rhetorical move generated helped delineate literature's boundaries anew. In addition, Mori employed such a "scientific" manner to refute Iwamoto that Mori's criticism helped further distance itself from the object that it evaluates, i.e., "aesthetic literature." Thus, the exchange between Iwamoto and Mori altogether seems to underscore the privileged position assigned to criticism.

At the same time, in his confrontation with Iwamoto, Mori's criticism indicated the intermediary space of "trans-" where "the beautiful idea" is brought to be "substantiated," exhibited the unobservability and inexplicability of that space, and thereby found itself standing in a strange position. As mentioned above, it is true that Mori's language literally and performatively highlighted the distance between criticism and what it criticizes. At the same time, however, it also became haunted by what it cannot verbalize and ultimately besieged by the indivisibility of allegedly divided intellectual categories. In other words, the divisions between criticism and literature, "science" and "aesthetics" were delineated in Mori's criticism, only to incarnate an "intensely hybridized mix" in its own unfolding.

One way to dislocate this strange position into which criticism was trapped is to demonstrate the process of "trans-" in the actual practice of producing literature. Along with his career as a doctor, translator, and critic, Mori began to write fiction just around when the "Literature and Nature" debate was brought to an end. The next chapter delves into Mori's first creative fiction "The Dancing Girl" and a polemic revolved around it ("Maihime"

ronsō). Soon after the work was published, several critics began to problematize the unfolding of the story. In what follows, I will investigate Mori's explanation on, or rather, his non-explaining of how what he calls "the beautiful idea" is "transubstantiated" in "The Dancing Girl" in the debate. In addition, this chapter aims to disclose another moment at which the claimed distance between criticism and literature began to topple and in so doing intervened in Japan's modernization discourses.

CHAPTER FOUR

Failing Criticism: The Case of the "Dancing Girl" Debate

Criticism, while claiming its independency from what it criticizes, was already failing in keeping its promise from the start. Although criticism in theory had to stand on the meta-level of its object of criticism, i.e., literature in this case, the division presumed between them became eroded by the very criticism practiced at that time. The result was an ultimate indistinguishability of criticism and literature. In this failure of criticism, however, I observe moments at which the language introduced in criticism at that time exercised its criticality. Criticism achieved this, perhaps inadvertently, by mobilizing rhetoric that completely came in conflict with the time and space from which it came into being. In the following two chapters, I enquire into how criticism, in its attempts to foster the autonomy of the aesthetic encapsulated in literature, betrayed what it said it would do, and in so doing dissented from Meiji Japan's contemporary discourses.

In this chapter, I look at a debate that followed the initial appearance of Mori Ōgai/Rintarō's first creative work "The Dancing Girl" in 1890. This debate ("Maihime" *ronsō*) was mainly fought between critic Ishibashi Ningetsu who had a degree in German law from the Imperial University of Tokyo and author Mori. Just like Mori, Ningetsu around this time enthusiastically sought to theorize how to realize "beauty" in a linguistic art and had recourse to the rhetoric of the idea (*sō*) and the real (*jitsu*), the most famous example of which is his seminal essay "Sōjitsuron" ("Theory of the Idea and the Real").¹²³ In that sense,

123. "Sōjitsuron" was originally serialized from March 20 to 30 in 1890 in daily periodical *Kōko shinbun*. The gist of "Sōjitsuron" can be summarized as follows: the harmonization of the idea and the real allows poets to 1) identify objects that evoke the feeling of beauty and 2) transform them into words. According to this logic, the idea that is conceived in poets' mind and objects phenomenalized in the world of the real, therefore, can be fused together without any contradiction. The idea and the real in Ningetsu thus do not involve qualitative difference; two poles can be simply unified within one homogenous dimension. This is where he crucially

Mori and Ningetsu at this point were very close, at least on the rhetorical level, with regard to how they constructed literature. Nevertheless, they ended up quarreling with each other many times throughout the first half of the 1890s.¹²⁴

Both Ningetsu and Mori were specialist of German studies and certainly had a stake in publicize their expertise through public debates. Aside from the non-negligible self-valorizing effects that debates generally bring forward in discussants' favor, though, Mori had a good reason to take issue with Ningetsu and his conceptualization of literature.

Ningetsu emphasized numerous times how he aimed to "combine and assimilate traditional Japanese literature and Western poetics so as to cultivate a different sphere anew."¹²⁵

Ningetsu's theory of literature was then often considered as "eclecticism" by his contemporaries including Mori.¹²⁶ On the other hand, as discussed previously, Mori's "beautiful idea" in literature functioned to reject any residue of localness that would possibly evoke Japan's "backwardness." When Ningetsu's eclecticism would possibly bring back in a certain aspect of the real—objects and phenomena that become phenomenalized in a specific time and space—and equally valued the real in the production of literature, Mori needed to nip it so as to bolster the absolute independency of "the beautiful idea." As such,

diverts from Mori who promotes the absolute immobility of the beautiful idea.

124. Aside from the debate on "The Dancing Girl," Mori and Ningetsu confronted against each other over Ningetsu's "Zaika ron" ("Theory of Causality," 1890) and Mori's short stories "Utakata no ki" ("The Account of Fleeting Bubbles," 1890) and "Fumizukai" ("The Letter Bearer," 1891).

125. Ningetsu, "Shoken no kōjō" ("Statement of the Beginning"), *Kōko shinbun*, March 18, 1890, 1. This is Ningetsu's manifesto upon joining *Kōko shinbun*. The eclectic view shown in Ningetsu's theory is significant, in that it is premised upon co-figuratively generated "Japan" and "the West." That both Mori and Ningetsu heavily draw on German writing traditions, that Mori almost exclusively sets European writings as a regulative model to seek literature's universality, and that Ningetsu introduces "Japan" so as to compete with Mori's Euro-centrism, altogether reinforce the "Japan-West" dyad.

126. Mori, "Ningetsu koji no nyūka o shukushite" ("Congratulating Ningetsu's Joining"), *Kōko shinbun*, March 26, 1890.

the "Dancing Girl" debate can be approached as part of the further aestheticization and absolutization processes of the concept of literature.

As the debate unfolded, however, their discussions came to divulge the porousness of the border putatively placed between criticism and literature. When establishing criticism was considered to be an indispensable stepping stone to achieve Japan's own literature (which then serves as a marker of modernization), the act of discussing a work of literature ("The Dancing Girl") itself had profound political overtones that embodied "Japan on its way to civilization." In its strong manifestation of the civilizational logic, however, the debate let slip what could come in discord with the believed linear progression of civilization in the context of Meiji Japan. The primary reason why I investigate this particular controversy is that it best illuminates how the distance between criticism and its object of evaluation, i.e., the fictional work "The Dancing Girl" became too close to remain severed, and how this failure generated an unexpected moment of friction with the context within which the debate itself came to appear.

At the same time, this chapter features the "Dancing Girl" debate also because I wish to challenge a fiction-centric tendency in modern Japanese literature studies in North America. "The Dancing Girl" is inarguably one of the most canonized pieces of fiction written in the Meiji period, and, a countless number of scholarship on this work has been produced both in Japan and elsewhere, in Japanese and in other languages.¹²⁷ Nevertheless,

127. There were two major trends in the "Dancing Girl" studies: on the one pole lies an "I-novelistic" approach to consider the work as Mori's personal confession, while on the other stands a tendency to situate the work as an example of the rise of Japan's modern self-consciousness (which became popular in the post-WWII period along with the popularity of modernization theory). These trends were prevalent until the 1980s (and still are to some extent), when some academics in Japan took the so-called "linguistic turn." For instance, Komori Yōichi presented structural, narratological approaches to analyze "The Dancing Girl" in the 1980s. Komori, *Buntai toshite no monogatari* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1988), and *Kōzō toshite no katari* (*Narration as Structures*) (Tokyo: Shin'yōsha, 1988).

a particular sort of unbalance exists at least between Japanese scholarship and its North American counterpart, when it comes to the number of studies that scrutinized this debate. Despite criticism's crucial function in the formation of modern Japanese literature, not much attention has been paid to the criticism that immediately followed the publication of "The Dancing Girl," outside Japanese scholarship.¹²⁸ It is possible to witness in this absence of scholarship that "fictional" works were more favored as a topic of scholarly investigation than "non-fictional" works in North America.

What types of materials originally written in non-English languages are preferred in North America as an object of academic investigation after all? That there is nearly no English scholarship on Ningetsu strengthens my point about the unbalance between the scholarly attention paid to fiction and that to criticism in North America. Ningetsu is almost exclusively identified as a critic but not as a fiction writer in existing Japanese scholarship, and, the absence of Ningetsu scholarship in North America could be a direct consequence of such a position given to Ningetsu in Japan. In other words, it is highly likely that Ningetsu has been neglected in North American academia, largely because he did not produce fictional works that later became canonized in Japanese scholarship.

The prioritization of fiction does not only exclude a possibility of witnessing dialogic relationships that a piece of writing may have had with surrounding discourses. What also needs to be noted is that scholarly favoring of fiction may end up essentializing

128. The studies about the "The Dancing Girl" debate did not emerge until the 1950s. Usui Yoshimi's *Kindai bungaku ronsō* (*Debates about Literature in the Modern*) (1956) was probably the first scholarly attempt to locate debates in the genealogy of literature studies. Following Usui, such scholars as Hasegawa Izumi, Sasabuchi Tomoichi, Kobori Keiichirō, Hiraoka Toshio, Isogai Hideo, Kabe Yoshitaka, Tanizawa Eiichi, and Chiba Shinrō closely examined this debate. The focus of these works are chiefly placed on how Mori dexterously navigated the discussion so as to refute Ningetsu effectively. A recent study by Saitō Mareshi marks an intervention in that Mori-centric narrative and sheds new light on the debate by reading "The Dancing Girl" within a larger context of the East Asian Sinographic sphere. Saitō, *Kanbunmyaku to kindai Nihon*, 150–158.

the civilizational hierarchy established between "the West and the Rest" through colonialism, positioning the former as a designated forerunner of the latter. To be more precise, fiction-centrism in academia could reinforce the thinking that any interpretive, theoretical attempt has to originate in "the West," while "the Rest" unconditionally follows the "Western" thinking in practice and waits to be interpreted. A possible consequence would be a forcible rendering of a version of modernization theory. Of course, such fiction-centrism in academia dictates what texts become available in English translation and included in school syllabi, which could further strengthen the undue emphasis on consuming fiction produced in "the Rest."

Multiple scholarly attempts have been already made in North America to directly or indirectly problematize this tendency over the past few decades, which include the thematizing and translating of theoretical works produced in Japan.¹²⁹ I wish that my dissertation project adds another layer to these preceding efforts, and that this specific chapter that directly addresses criticism in inseparable relation to fiction makes a convincing case on the arbitrariness of such divisions presumed between fiction and criticism.

"The Dancing Girl" was first published on January 3, 1890, in *Kokumin no tomo* (*The Nation's Friend*).¹³⁰ The work received immediate recognition among its intellectual

129. We can remember such works as Kevin Doak, *Dreams of Difference: The Japan Romantic School and the Crisis of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), Victor Koschmann, *Revolution and Subjectivity in Postwar Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), Natsume Sōseki, *Theory of Literature and Other Critical Writings*, trans. and ed. Atsuko Ueda et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), Kōjin Karatani, *History and Repetition*, trans. and ed. Seiji Lippit (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

130. Mori, "Maihime" ("The Dancing Girl"), *Kokumin no tomo* 69 (January 3, 1890): Appendix 1–17. It is Ishibashi Ningetsu who originally recommended Mori as a contributor to periodicals run by the Min'yūsha School, which indicates that they were not enemies. Trained in German, and, having a stake in promoting

contemporaries, partly because of the wide circulation that the medium *Kokumin no tomo* then enjoyed, and also because of author Mori's reputation as an up-and-coming introducer of European writing traditions. Shortly after the publication, a variety of commentaries began to appear, which highlights how "The Dancing Girl" was received in a multifaceted way by its contemporary readers. To name a few exemplary comments, Iwamoto Yoshiharu, for instance, took issue with the moral aspect of protagonist Ōta's behavior.¹³¹ Takuten Jōsen (also known as Noguchi Neisai) categorized "The Dancing Girl" in the genre of *ninjōbon* (books of romantic emotions) that was marked as "Edo-esque, premodern" during the Meiji teens.¹³² These varied readings offer a glimpse of what readers at that time were expecting upon encountering a piece of writing that was being categorized as literature.

Discussions about "The Dancing Girl" took an interesting turn a month later when then-leading intellectual Ishibashi Ningetsu released a two-page essay, evaluating the work.¹³³ Ningetsu's essay triggered the most intense reaction from the author, which eventually developed into a heated debate. While acknowledging that "The Dancing Girl" was the "masterpiece among all the works appeared in *Kokumin no tomo*'s New Year's issue," Ningetsu listed five problems that he detected in the piece. His first concern is described as follows:

German studies in Japan, Mori and Ningetsu had common interests in using print media to promote themselves.

131. Iwamoto, "Kokumin no tomo shinnen furoku" ("The New Year's Appendices of *Kokumin no tomo*"), *Jogaku zasshi* 195 (January 11, 1890): 7.

132. Takuten Jōsen, "Maihime o yomite" ("Reading 'The Dancing Girl'"), *Shigarami zōshi* 4 (January 25, 1890): 51. Other than these, several commentaries appeared in *Shigarami zōshi*'s January 25th issue, including Yamaguchi Toratarō's "Maihime saihyō" ("Detailed Commentaries for 'The Dancing Girl'"): 46–50.

133. Ningetsu, "Maihime" ("The Dancing Girl"), *Kokumin no tomo* 72 (February 3, 1890): 38–39.

The plot of "The Dancing Girl" is about the circumstance in life where romance and fame become incompatible. The work sets up an individual, who is timid, cowardly, merciful, uncourageous, and lacking in an independent mind and makes this character confront the circumstance. In so doing, the work reveals the relationship between his standing and his circumstance. . . . I cannot help saying that, in Ōta's act, that is, in the part about his abandoning Erisu and returning to Japan, the relationship among the character's personality, circumstance, and action becomes incoherent. . . . I believe that he [Ōta] needs to be someone who would abandon fame and choose romance. . . . The author is aware of the difference between the realm of poetry and that of human affairs, and yet, he ultimately forgot about it when putting the difference into practice.¹³⁴

In addition to this first problem, Ningetsu named four other issues in the following order: 2) the author's failure to maintain consistency in the depiction of the protagonist; 3) the unnecessary description of the protagonist's biographical information; 4) the title being inappropriate; and 5) the improper mixture of German proverb and Japanese language.

Ningetsu spent most of his essay in elaborating the first point regarding why Ōta left Erisu to take the job opportunity in Japan.¹³⁵ In fact, this first point was interpreted by many scholars as an indication of Ningetsu's ethically-driven romanticism.¹³⁶ And yet, Ningetsu's problematization has nothing to do with ethical treatment of women nor romanticization of love. We need to keep in mind that what Ningetsu is taking issue with is the unfortunate disagreement between Ōta's personality and his action, and how this disagreement possibly

134. Ningetsu, "Maihime," 38.

135. The first point takes up about one third of the entire essay (thirty two lines). From the second to the last points, Ningetsu spends much less space (five to fifteen lines), which suggests that Ningetsu's primary concern is placed on the first one. However, this first point never became the central topic of contestation.

136. For example, Isogai Hideo writes, because Ningetsu was "emotionally moved," "he became all the more intolerant of Ōta's abandoning of Erisu, which conveys Ningetsu's youthful romanticism." Isogai, *Mori Ōgai: Meiji nijūnendai o chūshin ni (Mori Ōgai: Surrounding the Meiji 20s)* (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1979), 179. Ochi Haruo observes "an extremely romantic orientation hidden inside Ningetsu." Ochi, *Kindai bungaku seiritsuki no kenkyū (Studies on the Inaugural Period of Modern Literature)* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984), 335–356.

prevented "The Dancing Girl" from reaching the realm of poetry, i.e., what Ningetsu refers to as the fundamental source of beauty elsewhere.¹³⁷

After two months of silence, Mori finally made his official response to Ningetsu in "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" ("Letter to Kidori Han'nojō").¹³⁸ The debate quickly unfolded when Ningetsu returned his feedback, "Maihime saihyō" ("Second Criticism to 'The Dancing Girl'") (Part One).¹³⁹ Despite the appearance of heating exchanges of opinions thereafter, however, their correspondences fell out of joint almost entirely throughout the debate.

First of all, in his first response to Ningetsu, Mori completely rearranged the order by which Ningetsu presented his five problems. The order reorganized by Mori proceeds, following the numbering of Ningetsu's five points mentioned above, 4) - 3) - 2) - 1) to 5). Basically, Mori almost reversed the original order and refuted Ningetsu's points backwardly. It is possible to think that Mori hit back Ningetsu by grappling with relatively easier, stylistic questions first before turning to the more conceptual ones. In addition, Mori did not treat Ningetsu's primary concern regarding the story's incoherency with equal gravity and simply responded:

If choosing a person with such personality as a poetic material equaled disregarding the difference between the realm of poetry and that of human affairs, Shakespeare, who created "Hamlet," would be counted as someone who did not understand the difference between the realm of poetry and that of human affairs. Let alone Goethe who created "Werther." . . . Why couldn't two minds coexist?: one mind that respects

137. Ningetsu speaks of the relationality between beauty and poetry in such writings as "Sōjitsuron." "Shijin to gairaibutsu" ("Poets and Extraneous Objects") also touches on that. "Shijin to gairaibutsu," *Kokumin no tomo* 62 (September 12, 1889).

138. Mori, "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho," *Shigarami zōshi* 7 (April 25, 1890): 20–27.

139. Ningetsu, "Maihime saihyō" (Part One), *Kōko shinbun*, April 27, 1890, 1.

virginity, and the other that leaves a woman with irremediable mental illness after asking her mother to take care of her and providing living expenses?¹⁴⁰

Mori's rearrangement of the order of Ningetsu's five problems along with his simple negation of what Ningetsu named "incoherency" together disjointed their interactions; when Ningetsu responded to Mori's refutation, the former faithfully followed the rearranged order and began by answering back to the question of whether "The Dancing Girl" was a proper title or not (Ningetsu's fourth problem that turned into Mori's first refutation point).¹⁴¹ Their following exchanges proceeded around the title of this story for a while, deferring the moment to reach Ningetsu's primary question about the incoherency.

Furthermore, Mori continued to publish new essays one after another without offering Ningetsu enough time to say anything in response in a punctual manner.¹⁴² While Ningetsu was baffled, Mori showered questions on Ningetsu, driving Ningetsu into a corner. It is highly likely that Mori's non-stop, extremely aggressive refutation impeded Ningetsu from prevailing in the debate. Eventually Ningetsu withdrew from the battle after his "Maihime sanhyō" ("Third Criticism to 'The Dancing Girl,' Continued") (Part Four).¹⁴³ The

140. Mori, "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho," 25–26.

141. In his April 27 essay "Maihime saihyō" (Part One), Ningetsu only touched on the question regarding the validity of the title.

142. His April 27 essay "Maihime saihyō" (Part One) was incomplete, clearly showing the word, "Unfinished," at its end. It is an obvious indication that the sequel essay was about to follow. Nevertheless, Mori did not wait for Ningetsu's follow-up entry. Mori immediately responded to Ningetsu's incomplete essay in "Futatabi, Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" ("Again, Letter to Kidori Han'nojō") on April 28 on *Kokumin shinbun* (*The National Paper*). The focus of this essay still remained to be the title's effectiveness. It is only after Mori's April 28 essay that Ningetsu's sequel essay "Maihime saihyō" (Part Two) came out on April 29. Their correspondences were thus out of joint. To the disadvantage of Ningetsu, this out-of-joint-ness made Ningetsu look as if he had been losing the initiative in the debate.

143. Ningetsu, "Maihime sanhyō" (Part Four), *Kōko shinbun*, May 6, 1890, 1. Right behind Ningetsu's entry on the May 6th issue of *Kōko shinbun*, another essay "Mōshi Goryōninsama" ("Addressing to the Two of You"), contributed by someone under the pseudonym of Ritarō, is inserted and explains in a comical way that the debate should discontinue because both debaters may as well focus on promoting German studies instead of fighting: "Isn't now a time of a serious crisis for German studies? Isn't it the most important thing for us, who happened to encounter in the time like this, to publicize the benefits of German studies and awaken the society

debate was thus brought to an end without seeing any clear conclusion, leaving an impression that Mori's rigorousness and swiftness overwhelmed his opponent.¹⁴⁴

Ningetsu's most urgent question regarding the incoherency in "The Dancing Girl" was pushed aside in the disjointed debating process, and accordingly, whether or not the story successfully attained the realm of poetry and incarnated beauty throughout its body never had a chance to become foregrounded in their discussions. At the end of the previous chapter, I mentioned that the ambiguous position into which criticism drove itself—whether or not it can clarify the "transubstantiation" process of beauty and thereby remain on the meta-level vis-à-vis literature—could have been elucidated through the discussions about "The Dancing Girl," a piece of writing that was claimed to be the actual work of literature. The point of elucidation arguably became the closest when Ningetsu raised a question regarding the incoherency of Ōta's characterization.¹⁴⁵ The clarification did not happen, nonetheless. In fact, the discussion on beauty was completely missing from the debate; rather, due to Mori's acrobatic refutation, it appears almost as if the debate had willingly postponed the moment to identify the creation procedure of beauty. How the

from illusory dreams?" Ritarō's comment epitomizes what was at stake in the act of debating in public; debates publicize debaters as well as their topic of discussion. In the case of the "Dancing Girl" debate, the appearance of a public debate made known the work "The Dancing Girl," Mori and Ningetsu as intellectuals, and their specialty German studies.

144. The correspondences between Ningetsu and Mori provided a decisive framework through which "The Dancing Girl" were examined. Ningetsu's problematization—whether or not Ōta should have chosen romance over fame—held a great impact on how the text was interpreted for a long time. Among a vast number of studies that commented on "The Dancing Girl," many employed the "fame or romance" binary and paid exclusive attention to the Ōta-Erisu relationship (representing Ōta's romantic satisfaction) and the Ōta-Aizawa/Amakata connection (corresponding to Ōta's political success and subsequent regaining of impaired fame). Needless to say, there is no necessity that "The Dancing Girl" has to be approached solely from the fame-or-romance perspective. This debate, nonetheless, ended up defining the tone of scholarship.

145. Mori and Ningetsu later debated over Mori's other short stories, "Utakata no ki" ("The Account of Fleeting Bubbles") and "Fumizukai" ("The Letter Bearer"). In my reading, these two debates also revolved around the creation process of beauty in works of literature. Upon publications of each story, Ningetsu questioned what lies at the core of Mori's works, asking Mori to explain the "interiority" or "reasons" behind the stories. Both times Mori evaded answering Ningetsu's questions directly. Though I do not explore these controversies further in my dissertation, I wish to do so elsewhere.

"transubstantiation" of beauty takes place remained unexplained, hence leaving criticism's position still ambivalent.

To be clear: I am not arguing that Mori and Ningetsu made fruitless efforts in arguing over "The Dancing Girl," nor that the debate on "The Dancing Girl" provoked no consequences in its time. The interactions between them did not help illuminate the creation process of beauty, and thereby failed to elucidate its position vis-à-vis literature.

Alternatively, however, their criticism opened up a forum where criticism began to betray its premise of its own meta-language-ness. I argue that it is in its failure to demonstrate its exceptionalism that criticism began to exercise its critical function.

So far my discussion has been taking it for granted that the debate over "The Dancing Girl" proceeded between Mori Ōgai/Rintarō and Ishibashi Ningetsu. Strictly speaking, however, this is not accurate. In fact, they did not interact with each other as who they were as writers; instead, they disguised themselves as somebody other than themselves, assuming different names and personae. That who they really were was obvious to their contemporary readers is not an issue. The point is the performative aspect of their correspondences, regardless of whether they were conscious of it or not. As a consequence of their performative disguise, their interaction in the form of criticism gradually began to trespass on the world constructed in "The Dancing Girl." The result was the confusion of criticism and what it criticizes, that of reality and fiction.

Using pen names to write is nothing unusual even nowadays, let alone during the Meiji period. Both Mori and Ningetsu had several different names for their writing career.¹⁴⁶

146. Ningetsu had more than thirty pen names. Ishibashi Sadakichi. "Kaisetsu" in *Ishibashi Ningetsu*

Needless to say, the names for which they are most known today, "Mori Ōgai" and "Ishibashi Ningetsu," are not their legal names. When Ningetsu's first criticism against "The Dancing Girl" came out, his essay was signed as "Kidori Han'nojō," a name of a fictional character that appears in one of Ningetsu's own novels, *Tsuyuko hime* (*Lady Tsuyuko*).¹⁴⁷

Receiving criticism from the fictional character that Ningetsu created, Mori made his address under the name of another fictional character of his own, "Aizawa Kenkichi": obviously one of the major characters from "The Dancing Girl." Aizawa appears in the story as a good, defensive friend of the protagonist Ōta. In the beginning of his first response to Ningetsu, Mori assumes Aizawa's persona and writes:

. . . , I'm not a person who is literate in poetic writings. Because of that, when I read my friend Ōta Toyotarō's account that he wrote on the ship, I was simply moved by that and didn't think about whether or not I should pass his writing forward. Recently I heard that someone called Ōgai entitled Toyotarō's account "The Dancing Girl" and published it on a journal *Kokumin no tomo*.¹⁴⁸

Making their addresses under the names of fictional characters could have been a frivolous move. Yet, its effects were more than accidental, in that the words and deeds of these fictional characters ended up serving as an animating discursive forum that was not confined by arbitrarily-decided categories such as criticism and literature. The debate unfolded as if it had been a continuation of the story of "The Dancing Girl." Aizawa in the

hyōronshū (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1939), 224.

147. *Tsuyuko hime* was first published on November 27, 1889. Kidori Han'nojō is depicted as an indecisive, morally-deficient man who falls in love with Tsuyuko. Presumably Ningetsu is making an analogy between Kidori and Ōta in order to illuminate the latter's indecisiveness.

148. Mori, "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho," 20.

debate began to live his own life as if he had existed in reality, apart from the world constructed by author Mori. It is this "as if" that needs to be further contemplated.

The portrayal of Aizawa in "The Dancing Girl" undoubtedly works in favor of Mori in the debate. While Ōta is described as someone who cannot exercise his agency at any decisive moment in the story, Aizawa is depicted as an ultimate decision maker on Ōta's behalf. Aizawa runs a risk to play a role of a villain just to save his friend from adverse circumstances. He secures a job for Ōta in Berlin, escorts Ōta towards the Count Amakata, arranges Ōta's homecoming, and helps Ōta restore his reputation as a bureaucrat. Most importantly, Aizawa tells Erisu about Ōta's departure from Germany, while Ōta avoids confronting with her by driving himself into sickness and falling unconscious. Despite all the support, Aizawa is later blamed by Ōta for "spiritually killing Erisu." Aizawa is thus continuously painted as Ōta's protective friend. When Ningetsu raised five problems about "The Dancing Girl," Mori made a decision to stay behind the shadow of Aizawa. Mori never explained outspokenly why he set Aizawa in confrontation with Ningetsu/Kidori. Although the answer remains unknown, this move definitely brought about multiple effects. For one thing, obviously, the mobilization of Aizawa in the debate created an appearance of Aizawa once again defending Ōta.

In addition, Aizawa's protectiveness in the story can camouflage potential weakness in Mori's arguments in the debate. As mentioned previously, Aizawa/Mori makes several unreasonable moves in responding to Kidori/Ningetsu, which only seems to undermine the clarity and convincingness of what is being said. However, this weakness can turn into a weapon when it is considered to derive from Aizawa's personal attempt to cover Ōta. That is to say, if these letters to Kidori Han'nojō are regarded as writer Mori's words, Mori's acrobatic, aggressive move simply becomes a fatal weak point. However, if those addresses

are considered to be character Aizawa's account, the inconsistency in his narrative can function as a proof of his desperate, frantic attempt to defend his friend Ōta. If Aizawa's defense for Ōta in the debate seems faltering, Aizawa's personal narrative can paradoxically gain more credibility, precisely because of its weakness. Aizawa's letters to Kidori thus construct a scenario in which Aizawa protects Ōta so passionately that the former even has to sacrifice the clarity of his account. With Aizawa's name on them, the stake of these letters shifts from the validity of writer Mori's rebuttal against Ningetsu to the sincerity of Aizawa's friendship with Ōta. As such, the appearance of Aizawa directly speaking to Kidori enables Mori to make an outlandish rhetorical move without being accused of sacrificing clarity.

When Aizawa shows up in the space of criticism to justify Ōta's action, the border between the world of "The Dancing Girl" and that of criticism is beginning to be disturbed. The troubled boundaries become further confusing because of the mediums on which their correspondences appear. Aizawa's first letter, for instance, is published in *Shigarami zōshi*, a journal specifically dedicated to criticism, whose space, according to the founder Mori, necessarily remains external to what it takes as an object of criticism. By bringing in fictional characters in the space limited to criticism, their criticism's content in a sense betrays the form within which it is announced. This discrepancy between the form and the content inevitably generates the sense of bewilderment.

Reading this debate thus necessitates constant back-and-forth movements between the formal and content aspect of their criticism. In order to guarantee the integrity of criticism that ought to stay on the meta-level, the formal aspect of their essays can be referred to. The mediums that feature criticism almost confirms criticism's privileged position. Nevertheless, the criticism written in the form of personal letters addressed to and

from fictional characters again problematizes its meta-language-ness. Letters are narrated in the name of fictional characters as an extension of the world of "The Dancing Girl," which reinforces the discrepancy between the form and the content all the more. At the same time, this discrepancy continues to evoke what is precluded from the explicit surface of their criticism: namely, the absence of Mori and Ningetsu as producers of criticism. Their absence in the content of criticism, however, inversely inscribes them as critics in the mediums where the content is enclosed.¹⁴⁹

Criticism here no longer remains the same with what it is claimed to be in its purest sense, as it cannot simply remain external to what it is criticizing. Criticism now only dwells within the gap from its own premise to maintain an objective distance from what it engages with. Is it criticism? Or, are readers abruptly thrown back into the fictional world of "The Dancing Girl"? These questions simply linger on. The border between criticism and what it criticizes is thus troubled throughout the debate. In Introduction, I briefly mapped out how both Mori and Ningetsu claimed the necessity to establish criticism in advance of literature. To reiterate: Mori's launching of journal *Shigarami zōshi* that carried a specific epithet "*bungaku hyōron*" (evaluative discussions on literature) and Ningetsu's prolific writings evaluating other works well exemplify their focus on the stabilization of criticism in the late 1880s into the early 1890s.¹⁵⁰ However, the correspondences between Ningetsu/Kidori and Mori/Aizawa are reflected back onto their own claim about criticism's

149. My exploration of form and content was originally inspired by one of the lectures that Slavoj Žižek gave in a seminar series *Philosophy Through Psychoanalysis* that took place in March and April 2014 at Princeton University.

150. *Shigarami zōshi* was Mori's stronghold from which to promote his theory of literature. In some issues, more than half of the contributions were made by Mori himself (under different pen names). Ningetsu at that time had strong affiliation with the Min'yūsha school. Between 1888 and 1893, Ningetsu published more than two hundred essays in total, about one hundred of which appeared in mediums run by Min'yūsha, such as *Kokumin no tomo* or *Kokumin shinbun*.

objectivity, implode its privilege, and in the end reveal the impossibility of dividing criticism from its object.

I must hasten to emphasize, however, that the impossibility of severing criticism entirely from its object does not cancel what their correspondences were possibly engendering. Rather, the mutual infiltration of criticism and its object in the case of the "Dancing Girl" brought about an oddity that utterly fell in conflict with the historical moment that conditioned the discussions about "The Dancing Girl" themselves. In the moment when criticism and literature became indistinguishable from one another, I observe that the "Dancing Girl" debate was turning disharmonious with the time and space in which it was taking place, and thereby set in motion a critique against Japan's modernization discourses.

As suggested already, the merging of criticism and literature throughout the "Dancing Girl" debate manifests in the form of the confusion between reality and fiction. Reading fiction usually functions to confirm the non-fictionality, i.e., reality that encapsulates the fiction. However, the controversy revolved around "The Dancing Girl" reveals how reality that fiction is supposed to assure became eroded by the very fiction. Reality where debaters stood began to be affected and modified by fiction, and became transformed into something other than reality. As a result, it is no longer that reality acted upon fiction; rather, it is reality that was acted upon by fiction. Reality then became a variant of fiction. For instance, in his reading of "The Dancing Girl," Ningetsu treated fictional character Ōta Toyotarō as if he had existed in reality. "Someone like Ōta would not be able to choose fame over romance": a comment like this would not be made, unless otherwise. In other words, Ningetsu participated in the world of "The Dancing Girl" so as to internalize Ōta's reality. In that sense, the Ōta presented in Ningetsu's criticism is the latter's

own creation to which he gave a version of reality. This newly created Ōta in Ningetsu's reading is not necessarily identical to the character that Mori originally constructed in the story of "The Dancing Girl."

The relationality between fiction and non-fiction became most foregrounded during the debate, when Aizawa/Mori made an uncanny remark in his first letter to Kidori/Ningetsu. In the interrogation about whether or not Ōta's mind to respect virginity and that to return to Japan can coexist (Kidori/Ningetsu's first point), Aizawa/Mori states that these two minds are not contradictory to each other. Then, in order to explain why that is the case, Aizawa/Mori offers hypothetical scenarios about what could have happened instead if the story had not developed into the way that it was originally narrativized. Aizawa/Mori says:

You might say, it is before Erisu went mad when Ōta abandoned her, and that it is at this point when he gave in to his previous mind that respected virginity. But this is just a statement by someone who does not understand the state of a weak person who is driven by circumstances. Ōta is weak. It is a fact that he accepted the Count's offer. However, if he had never fallen ill to the degree that he could not remain conscious of what was happening around him after he went back home, and, if Erisu had never gone mad and had a chance to converse with Ōta, Ōta might have relinquished the thought to return to Japan. How would we ever know? If he had given up returning to Japan and lost his face against the Count, perhaps he would have felt deeply ashamed and even killed himself. How would we ever know? Even slaves would be capable of terminating their lives, let alone Ōta. It purely depended on luck that things actually did not turn towards those directions.¹⁵¹

What is happening in this passage has decisive implications in my argument, when the duality of Aizawa and Mori is taken into account. "The Dancing Girl" is a story constructed by author Mori. If the hypothetical arguments above are taken as a word from Mori, this passage naturally invites a question: "Then, why didn't the author write these scenarios from the start?" "The Dancing Girl" is already written and made public. That the

151. Mori, "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho," 26.

original author insinuates probabilities of different endings would potentially place him into a disadvantageous position, especially in the debate, in that he lets himself look repentant for choosing the Ōta-leaving-Erisu ending over other options. Accordingly, both "The Dancing Girl" and its creator could end up being labeled as a failure. To reiterate, however, the addresser is not quite Mori. This addresser has a face of Aizawa who is persistently conducting himself as Ōta's defender in the front line throughout the debate. Seen from that viewpoint, the arguments above look more acceptable as one of the desperate attempts that Ōta's guardian makes in order to save Ōta from his predicament. This appearance creates a room for leniency, and as a consequence, the absurdity of these hypothetical-if scenarios could be tolerated more.

More importantly, the introduction of the hypothetical-ifs into Aizawa's account implies putting additional layers of fictionality to the Aizawa/Mori-Kidori/Ningetsu correspondences. Multiple letters exchanged between Kidori Han'nojō and Aizawa Kenkichi already have an fictional appearance. These already-fictional letters are brought onto another level of fiction by way of hypothetical possibilities implanted in the story world. The crucial effect of the introduction of these hypotheses is that fictional character Aizawa begins to look as if he was departing from the fictional world of "The Dancing Girl" to which he originally belonged, mobilized his imagination, and ended up fictionalizing different, alternative endings. Fiction is weaving another fiction by introducing different hypotheses of what would have been possible alternatively.

What makes Aizawa's narrative more complicated is that, for Aizawa, the world of "The Dancing Girl" is not supposed to be fiction but reality in which he resides. Aizawa makes an interesting observation about the relationship between fiction and reality in his first letter. After raising different possibilities with which the story could have been closed,

Aizawa inserts an additional comment: "It purely depended on luck that things actually did not turn towards those directions."¹⁵² In fact, that he brings in "luck" here further problematizes the relationship between fiction and reality.¹⁵³ His comment above indicates that whether a possibility develops into reality or not hinges upon chance. That is to say, by chance, a possibility may be realized or remain as a possible, hypothetical, or fictional scenario. In this line of thought, reality becomes conceived merely accidental and uncertain until it becomes realized. According to this logic, there can be no a priori necessity for reality to exist as such, as what concretizes reality is contingent upon chance. Reality, therefore, is necessarily a posteriori, preceded by multiple other possibilities that can become realized.

When this logic comes back to the discussions about "The Dancing Girl," it works in favor of Aizawa/Mori, regardless of whether such an effect is calculated or not. That is to say, the thought that fiction and reality are mediated by "luck" serves as a reasonable counterargument against Kidori/Ningetsu's problematization, for it can explain the incoherency about which Kidori/Ningetsu spared most of his first essay to criticize "The Dancing Girl." Kidori/Ningetsu says: "I cannot help saying that, in Ōta's act, that is, in the part about his abandoning Erisu and returning to Japan, the relationship among the character's personality, circumstance, and action becomes incoherent."¹⁵⁴ If what becomes realized is contingent upon "luck," however, the disconnectedness of Ōta's action from his

152. Mori, "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho," 26.

153. After the controversy on "The Dancing Girl," Mori and Ningetsu came to debate over another work of Mori "Utakata no ki." Responding to Ningetsu's criticism, Mori argues that "there are occasions in which characters in story would all of the sudden make an action against their personalities." Mori's comment here indirectly provided his view on the fame or romance issue raised in the "Dancing Girl" debate. Mori, "Ningetsu no yūgenron ni kotauru sho" ("A Note to Answer Ningetsu's Theory of Delicate Grace"), *Shigarami zōshi* 14 (November 25, 1890): 8.

154. Ningetsu, "Maihime," 38.

personality and the surrounding situation can be the very proof of reality being determined by chance. Therefore, Kidori/Ningetsu's accusation of the illogical unfolding of Ōta's behavior conversely works advantageously to Aizawa/Mori as their justification of the realized version of the story.

In addition, by pointing to "luck," Aizawa's logic implies that his reality does not need to be the only reality conceivable. He does reassure that the reality in which he exists is indeed a realized one. This reality and Aizawa's being in it, however, belong to the constructed story world of "The Dancing Girl," which necessarily evokes the fact that they are fictionalized by author Mori. Whatever Aizawa says about the possible, hypothetical, or fictional scenarios is self-referentially reflected back onto his reality and his own existence, which by extension reaches the reality where Mori stands. If Aizawa's theory about "luck" is to be believed, then the reality of where Mori stands also needs to be conceived merely accidental, governed by "luck." Reality in its purest sense suddenly becomes uncertain as a consequence, as it is just one out of multiple other possible, hypothetical, or fictional scenarios. A chain of fictions thus begins to overlap with a chain of realities. The border between fiction and reality cannot be sustained, given the layers of fictionality and reality added onto each other.¹⁵⁵

The impossibility to distinguish criticism from what it criticizes, reality from fiction, that came to manifest in the "Dancing Girl" debate conversely foregrounds a possibility of writing practices that are not bound by such categories. Rather, it demonstrates the arbitrariness of those divisions, revealing that writing practices do not need to be classified

155. Aizawa's alternative endings never saw a chance to be scrutinized further in the debate, as their discussion topic became too bogged down by Ningetsu's fourth point (the validity of the title featuring a sub-character). The possibilities of the hypothetical-if scenarios were suspended in the midair, never to be brought back in afterwards. Aizawa's narrative thus remains as possibilities of fictionalization that will never be realized.

as such from the start. In this manner, the correspondences between Aizawa and Kidori, Mori and Ningetsu call into question the postulated categories.

Furthermore, the rhetoric of "luck" (*gyōkō*) that Aizawa/Mori turned to in his confrontation with Kidori/Ningetsu enacted more than just a cancelling of the putative categorical divisions. "Luck" at this historical moment had a particularly unfavorable connotation, and its sudden appearance in their debate completely fell out of time and place. The result was highly uncomfortable discordance between this controversy and the historical context within which the debate itself was conditioned. In order to highlight this point, let us look at how the rhetoric and concept of "luck" was treated in the contemporary discursive space in the late nineteenth century, especially around journal *Kokumin no tomo* where "The Dancing Girl" became first published and recognized.

In many ways, *Kokumin no tomo* functioned to redefine what "politics" should or should not be in its contemporary publishing world.¹⁵⁶ The journal was inaugurated by Tokutomi Sohō in February, 1887. It is not a coincidence that the journal's publication took place along with the virtual disintegration of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement under severe governmental oppression in the early 1880s. That is to say, while opportunities for direct participation in political activities ceased to be readily available, *Kokumin no tomo* was brought into sudden prominence and acquired much readership among young generations. Socio-literature scholar Kimura Naoe's extraordinary study *Seinen no tanjō* (*The Birth of Youth*) details the processes through which this medium rhetorically constructed different types of politicized (or rather, depoliticized) beings, thereby having

156. Contemporary critic Miura Masashi maintains that *Kokumin no tomo* defined what intellectuals should be talking about at that time. Karatani Kōjin, ed., *Kindai Nihon no hihyō: Meiji, Taishō hen* (*Criticism in Modern Japan*) (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1998), 59–60.

much impact not only on young people's daily practices but also on their thought formation.¹⁵⁷ By rhetorically distancing itself from the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, *Kokumin no tomo* rejected the figure of "stalwart youth" (*sōshi*) as "barbaric," "uncivilized" activists whose practices produced no result, and instead painted another figure of sophisticated, rather depoliticized youth (*seinen*) who took charge of the construction of a "new Japan" in the believed future.¹⁵⁸ We must not forget that "The Dancing Girl" made its debut as a work of literature produced by a young Japanese elite in this medium, a vehicle of further (de)politicization of the youth.

One of the interesting observations that Kimura makes is that *Kokumin no tomo* to a great extent prioritized the law of causality upon rhetorically producing a figure of youth around the late 1880s.¹⁵⁹ The journal's chief editor Tokutomi Sohō, for example, articulates

157. Kimura, *Seinen no tanjō*, Chapters 1 and 3.

158. *Kokumin no tomo*'s idea about how one should act in the construction of a "new Japan" is exemplified in Tokutomi Sohō's "Meiji nijūsan nen" ("The 23rd Year of Meiji"), his New Year's address in *Kokumin no tomo*, dated January 3, 1890:

. . . , this 23rd year of Meiji (1890) is the year when the first Imperial Diet, which every human affair has been subjugated to and concentrated upon, is to be established, . . . If you wish to have this year successfully proceed its path, you must first determine to make this first Imperial Diet smoothly unfold. . . . Now, this 23rd year of Meiji, it is almost the time to mobilize all nationals and throw them into a furnace. If you left yourself entirely absent-minded and self-indulgent at this moment, the beginning of worldly disasters would develop from there. . . . For our nationals too, do not leave anything behind without sincerely contemplating it.

* The imperial mandate for the establishment of the Imperial Diet was issued on October 12, 1881.

Sohō makes such a strong appeal so as to remind his readers of how they should prepare for the monumental event of the opening of the Diet. However, despite his enthusiastic tone, Sohō does not describe what the preparation involves in concrete terms. The vagueness of his remark is indicative of how the medium paints a figure of youth without using language that evokes direct participation in politics. The readers are clearly interpellated as an essential constituent of a "new Japan," and yet, they can take part in the "new Japan" project only in so far as they are not directly involved in political activities.

It is in this same issue that "The Dancing Girl" came out. As I explore shortly, the work appeared in the medium that prioritized logical, straightforward, and orderly development of time, while triggering the debate that eventually disturbed that order.

159. Kimura, *Seinen no tanjō*, 214.

in his 1890 remark about how his readers should prepare for the opening of the first Imperial Diet as follows: "An event necessarily becomes effect in relation to what comes before, and cause in connection with what comes after."¹⁶⁰ Under the belief that youth's "depoliticized" daily practices would necessarily lead to the construction of a more "civilized" Japan in the future, *Kokumin no tomo* prioritized logic, reason, knowability, predictability, and linear and continuous progression. What it rejected in inverse proportion includes illogicality, unreason, unknowability, unpredictability, and possibilities of disturbing progression.¹⁶¹ The key term that was frequently used to represent the latter category in the journal, according to Kimura, is "luck."¹⁶²

While Kimura's research focuses on how the belief in causality manifested in *Kokumin no tomo*, it is possible to see that the same principle was favored and discussed in other contemporary mediums. For instance, Ishibashi Ningetsu, who had a tight connection to *Kokumin no tomo* as its major contributor at that time, specifically developed a theory of causality.¹⁶³ Ningetsu serialized an essay "Zaika ron" ("Theory of Causality") from April 1 to 3, 1890 as his response to the condemnation from Mori and Yamaguchi Toratarō, when they had previously bashed that Ningetsu too one-sidedly applied "Aristotle's theory of

160. Sohō, "Meiji nijūsan nen," 2.

161. Needless to say, in *Kokumin no tomo* the former is associated with "youth," the latter with "stalwart youth."

162. Kimura, *Seinen no tanjō*, 212–216.

163. Ningetsu's affiliation with the Min'yūsha school began in the late 1880s. Starting with "*Yabu no uguisu no saihyō*" ("Detailed Commentaries on *Warbler in the Bush*" (1888), Ningetsu regularly contributed essays to Min'yūsha's periodicals *Kokumin no tomo* and *Kokumin shinbun*, until right before he left Tokyo in the fall of 1893.

causality" to his reading of the novel.¹⁶⁴ Ningetsu repeats the significance of causality while denying a possibility of the novel falling out of it as follows:

Zaika is a motive (cause) that drives characters in tragic drama into the edge of misery. . . . *zaika* means, namely, cause for effect, a foreshadow for an end.¹⁶⁵

Characters would never fall into the edge of unhappiness and misery by chance if it were not for a motive (cause).¹⁶⁶

There are no events in the world that happen by chance. How would there be effect without cause? . . . In sum, the novel without cause is not novel.¹⁶⁷

In this manner, Ningetsu expresses his deep discomfort with the concept of "chance" and denies its possibility to develop into a determinant of any effect. The law of causality governs every event not only inside but also outside the novel, and therefore, there is no space for "chance" to interrupt the linearly predictable flow of events. The effect must be known in advance, and, its relationship with the cause is necessarily explicit. "Chance" in Ningetsu's theory is thus placed antagonistically to causality, in the similar way that "luck" is rejected as an opposite of causality in *Kokumin no tomo*. That the publication of Ningetsu's theory of causality coincided with the "Dancing Girl" debate in a sense explains why he needed to problematize the incoherency between Ōta's personality and his behavior (Ningetsu's first problematization). It is also not unrelated that the essay in which Kidori/

164. Although the correspondences among Ningetsu, Mori, and Yamaguchi did not develop further, this could be considered another form of debate that took place in close relation to "The Dancing Girl." Mori, "Shigarami zōshi no honryō o ronzu" ("Discussing the Core Feature of *Shigarami zōshi*"), *Shigarami zōshi* 1 (October 25, 1889): 3. Yamaguchi, "Maihime saihyō," 48.

165. Ningetsu, "Zaika ron, sono ichi," *Kōko shinbun*, April 1, 1890, 1.

166. Ningetsu, "Zaika ron, sono ni," *Kōko shinbun*, April 2, 1890, 1.

167. Ningetsu, "Zaika ron, sono san," *Kōko shinbun*, April 3, 1890, 1.

Ningetsu raised the question about the story's incoherency appeared in *Kokumin no tomo* that as a medium prioritized the logic of causality.¹⁶⁸ Regardless of whether Ningetsu and *Kokumin no tomo* were aware of this or not, they shared the viewpoint that possibilities of accident or coincidence need to be precluded in any event.

In this climate, the concept of "luck" carried an extremely unpleasant overtone as a factor to intervene in the logical, causal order. Nonetheless, in his response to the question regarding the story's incoherency, Mori under the name of Aizawa brought in "luck" so as to explain why Ōta behaved in the way he did. My aim here is not to elaborate "why" Mori did this; rather, what is significant is that the word "luck" was introduced in reaction to Ningetsu and *Kokumin no tomo*, both of whom were strongly averse to this concept at that time. Clearly, this "luck" was in discord with the time and space into which it was inserted. The implication of the discord entailed in this "luck" is crucial.

To be clear, I am not arguing that "The Dancing Girl" and following reactions of Mori in the debate were entirely at odds with the historical moment at which they came into existence. There is no doubt that the work and the discussions around it participated in the contemporary discursive movements, especially in the discourses about situating a "modernizing Japan" in the civilizational hierarchy vis-à-vis "advanced Europe" and "backward Asia." That Ōta's account is written in Saigon on his way from Germany to

168. As previously mentioned, Ningetsu was tightly affiliated with *Kokumin no tomo*. Therefore, Ningetsu's claim on Ōta's having to choose romance is rather ironic. As I said, in the same issue where "The Dancing Girl" appeared, *Kokumin no tomo* was exhorting its readers to develop more awareness of the opening of the National Diet. If I borrow Ningetsu's formulation, "The Dancing Girl" topicalized politics and ended with Ōta's ultimate choice of political fame over romance. In that sense, the work cohered with *Kokumin no tomo*'s agenda to enhance its readers' political awareness. However, Ningetsu argued that Ōta should have chosen romance (political failure) over fame (political success), which could undermine the medium's overarching goal. In addition, Ningetsu's reasoning was based on the very theory of causality. In other words, Ningetsu was arguing that, according to the law of causality, "The Dancing Girl" in *Kokumin no tomo* needed to prioritize romance over fame.

Japan is indicative of the triad relationship. In terms of its content, "The Dancing Girl" presents characters who are clearly racially marked: a Japanese man with a "yellow face" who conquers a German woman with "blue eyes" and "blond hair." Moreover, this yellow face teaches the blond proper German and cultivates her literacy. Thus in the story, the privileges that Ōta enjoys for his class and gender function to obscure, if not supersede the racial and civilizational hierarchy.¹⁶⁹ The status of a "still-modernizing Japan" as a follower of an "already-civilized Europe," namely, a social-Darwinistic scheme that repeatedly appeared in the contemporary discourses, is subverted in the story, and, this very subversion conversely manifests how a "modern Japan" in the Meiji period was haunted by the very hierarchy. Nonetheless, these elements latent in the story never became foregrounded in the debate. The obvious absence if not suppression of this topic also marks how the debate was not at all escaping from the contextual frame that delimited the debate itself.

The ways in which Meiji Japan's specific context is inscribed in "The Dancing Girl" have been studied thoroughly. For instance, Christopher Hill approaches "The Dancing Girl" from the perspective of narratology in relation to the construction of modern national subjectivity. By analyzing how the story naturalizes nationality as the essential basis of individual identity, Hill points to the work's complicity in the national.¹⁷⁰ Tomiko Yoda also demonstrates how the emergence of a narrating subject as a result of the convention of the first person narration in "The Dancing Girl" parallels the rise of a modern national subject.¹⁷¹ In terms of the relationship between the work and the context within which it is

169. Yoda, "First-Person Narration and Citizen-Subject: The Modernity of Ōgai's 'The Dancing Girl,'" *The Journal of Asian Studies* 65, no. 2 (May 2006): 290.

170. Hill, "Mori Ōgai's Resentful Narrator: Trauma and the National Subject in 'The Dancing Girl,'" *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 10, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 384–387.

171. Yoda, "First-Person Narration and Citizen-Subject," 296–300.

conceived, I am in agreement with their historicism. However, it also must be underlined that the work entails moments that refuse to be reduced to history. As Yoda correctly suggests in her analyses, "The Dancing Girl" formally calls the text's own historicity into question by bringing back the old writing custom (*gikobun*-style) in the form of fiction and also by disrupting the time and point of narration.¹⁷² I wish to emphasize that, not simply within "The Dancing Girl," but also discussions revolving around it offer a moment of historical oddity; the appearance of "luck" in the debate cannot simply conform to the logic of civilization prevalent in Meiji Japan. It is the discussions surrounding "The Dancing Girl," ones that were claimed to be criticism, that nurtured this odd moment of discordance with history.

The next chapter delves into the debate between Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō and Mori Ōgai/Rintarō that revolved around how (not) to define the ideal in literature: the so-called the negation of the ideal debate (*botsurisō ronsō*). By examining this controversy, I aim to portray how literature was further aestheticized, absolutized, and pushed into the realm of universality through the debating process thereof, and how such a discursive movement to seek universality in Japan's own literature was closely linked to the logic of civilization. At the same time, this chapter aims at revealing how the debating process over the absolute, universal ideal of literature generated a fugitive moment, putting itself out of joint from the time and space within which it was enclosed, and thereby developing a disquieting effect.

172. Yoda, "First-Person Narration and Citizen-Subject," 300–305.

CHAPTER FIVE

Criticism' Negativity: The Case of the Negation of the Ideal Debate

Many controversies about literature's boundaries took place in late nineteenth-century Japan. By and large, those discussions can be regarded as Meiji Japan's intellectual attempts to seek universality in the form of a nationalized particular: literature, an aesthetic belonging to Japan, that embodies some kind of universal nature. However, this universality cannot be considered universality in its purest sense. Pursuing universality in the context of late nineteenth-century Japan was inevitably touched by the civilizational logic, in which the West functioned as a regulative idea. Quite simply, in the same way that modernization was considered synonymous with Westernization, the seeking of universality paralleled modernization and Westernization, i.e., replicating the West that reigned supreme in the geopolitical hierarchy. To reiterate, such hierarchization is not based on empirical facts. Regardless of that, whatever Meiji Japan was looking for in the name of literature of their own, it needed to take its standard in the civilized West and reject traces of possibly uncivilized, local specificities of writing practices previously fostered in Japan. In that sense, universality imagined in Meiji Japan is nothing but historical.

This chapter focuses on the so-called negation of the ideal debate (*botsurisō ronsō*), in which two intellectuals, Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō and Mori Ōgai/Rintarō, continued heated discussions about how to conceive the universal origin of literature around the year of 1890. This controversy evolved around the rhetoric of "the ideal"—the ideal/*risō* as a derivative of the idea/*sō*, a compound of *ri* (reason, logic, law, principle) and *sō*. Just like other key words such as "nature" and "truth," "the ideal" was brought in use in the late nineteenth century, pointed to the invisible realm that is to be captured in a linguistic art, and facilitated

further aestheticization and absolutization of literature.¹⁷³ During this debate, the ideal, or rather, its negated, submerged form (*botsurisō*) became associated with multiple meanings ranging from "preconceptions" or "Platonic ideas" at times. Throughout the debating process, it became clearer that the (negated) ideal ultimately referred to the universal origin of a linguistic art. Despite that both discussants similarly postulated an eternal birthplace from which literature germinates, their discussions staged an appearance of an antithesis. As a result, their inflexible opposition became repetitively imprinted in most scholarship on the history of modern Japanese literature. Accordingly, what both of them were similarly positing—the universal origin of literature—has remained unquestioned and indirectly endorsed.

In fact, this dispute about the (negated) ideal of literature is arguably the most abstruse controversy among other debates that have been featured in this dissertation thus far, in terms of the abstractness of the concepts and arguments proposed in the debate.¹⁷⁴ Previous scholarship typically contended that the puzzling discussions about the ideal exchanged between Tsubouchi and Mori exemplified their incapability of effectively

173. This rhetoric began to appear in several discourses, traversing multiple practices such as theater, painting, and literature. Toyama Masakazu's theory about the contemporary scene of painting ("Nihon kaiga no mirai" ["Future of Paintings in Japan"], 1890) and Mori Ōgai/Rintarō's refutation against it ("Toyama Masakazu shi no garon o hakusu" ["Refuting Mr. Toyama Masakazu's Theory of Painting"], 1890), for instance, shared many topical and terminological similarities to the negated ideal debate. Given that such practices as theater, painting, and literature were all being categorized as "fine arts" around this time, the negation of the ideal debate can be considered as a symptom of a certain historical moment of Meiji Japan. As such, this debate illustrates how the ideal, another rhetoric to refer to an invisible value, became contagious across many fields that were similarly becoming aestheticized.

174. The abstruseness of the discussion on the submerged ideal was immediately recognized by its contemporaries. See Terayama Keisuke (Seisen), "Botsurisō no araso ni tsukite Ōgai Shōyō nisensei ni nozomu" ("Requesting Two Authorities Ōgai and Shōyō Regarding the Submerged Ideal"), *Jōnan hyōron* 2 (April 21, 1892): 2.

proposing theories of literature.¹⁷⁵ As much as I understand the challenge of reading this debate, however, such positioning of their discussions is not exempted from anachronism.

What I suggest instead is to approach the rhetoric of the ideal as a repository of universality. Precisely because of its abstractness, the ideal gained flexibility of containing anything non-concrete and provided a foundation upon which universality was imagined and claimed.¹⁷⁶ I argue that the ideal was required to remain unidentified so as to guarantee its abstractness and thereby retain its function as a storehouse of non-concrete universality. Being abstract was structurally necessary for the ideal to serve as the language of criticism, as rhetoric that was specifically reserved to discuss things untainted by local specificities. As such, it had to evade being identified and postpone its moment of concretization infinitely. The elongated, circular discussion on the essence of the ideal during the debate can be understood as a vital constituent for the search for universality. The ideal as a rhetorical device that circulated in late nineteenth-century Japan thus entailed duality; it was posited in evocation of universality, and yet, it simultaneously had to remain abstract so as to underwrite the unidentifiability of universality. That this debate revolved around both positive and negative forms of the ideal exemplifies such duality rendered to this rhetoric. When this rhetoric's abstractness is interpreted that way, the negation of the ideal debate

175. Shigematsu Yasuo, "Shōsetsu no rinen, hōhō o meguru ronsō: Meiji" (Debates about *Shōsetsu*'s Ideas and Methodologies: Meiji), *Kokubungaku: kaishaku to kanshō* (National Literature: Interpretation and Appreciation) 30 (January, 1965): 27. Usui Yoshimi, *Kindai bungaku ronsō jō* (Literary Debates in the Modern) (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1956), 8–9. Isogai Hideo, *Mori Ōgai: Meiji nijūnendai o chūshin ni*, 165. Tanizawa Eiichi, *Bungōtachi no ōgenka: Ōgai, Shōyō, Chogyū* (Huge Fights Between Writers) (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2003), 56–98.

176. That already abstract word "the idea" (*sō*) abandoned its one-character-ness and became conjoined with another conceptual character only helped to enhance the ideal/*risō*'s inscrutability. As more compounds came into being, the abstractness of the original character the idea/*sō* more easily became obscured and faded into oblivion. Consequently, the idea/*sō*'s recent history—pushing aside the non-real/*kyō*, sweeping away the locality that the non-real/*kyō* entailed, and thereby initiating a different linguistic order around it anew, became suppressed.

turns to the controversy that best illuminates Meiji Japan's historical urge to seek universality.

The notion of universality provides a conceptual ground upon which to transcend localness, specificities, individuals. This is crucial in the context of Meiji Japan, in that it helps to cancel the civilizational hierarchy interposed between Japan and Euro-American colonial powers, at least on a conceptual level. However, it is also vital to acknowledge that universality does not stand alone by itself. That is to say, individual locality, once removed, in fact functions to foster universality. As Naoki Sakai writes:

Contrary to what has been advertised by both sides, universalism and particularism reinforce and supplement each other; they are never in real conflict; they need each other and have to seek to form a symmetrical, mutually supporting relationship by every means in order to avoid a dialogic encounter that would necessarily jeopardize their reputedly secure and harmonized monologic worlds. Universalism and particularism endorse each other's defect in order to conceal their own; they are intimately tied to each other in their complicity. In this respect, a particularism such as nationalism can never be a serious critique of universalism, for it is an accomplice thereof.¹⁷⁷

This passage is indicative that it is necessary to think of universality, not independently of, but in relation to particularity. In the context of the Meiji period especially, particularity appears in the form of the national, i.e., "Japan" or "Japanese," however paradoxical it may seem.¹⁷⁸ Many discussions about literature's boundaries that took place during Meiji ultimately pointed to establishing literature in "Japan" vis-à-vis literature in "the West," the former as an equal (or an equal-to-be) to the latter. In this schema, while "the West"

177. Naoki Sakai, *Translation and Subjectivity: On Japan and Cultural Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 163.

178. Christopher Hill also mentions the relationship among the universal, the particular, and the national. Hill, "Mori Ōgai's Resentful Narrator," 366–368.

functions as a regulative, universal standard, a particular, "Japan," became imagined as one variant that would equally meet that standard. In that sense, as Sakai argues, universality and particularity are not oppositional but complicit with each other for their own perpetuation. Universality thus never cancels individual differences; rather, it underwrites particularities. The debate between Tsubouchi and Mori, in spite of its purport of the universal origin of literature, provided a basis upon which literature in Japan, i.e., a nationalized particular, became possible to be envisioned.

Regardless of whether the discussants were aware of such a function rendered to the rhetoric of the ideal, both Mori and Tsubouchi used this device to point to the ever-immutable, universal origin of literature. What needs to be remembered is that they posited it through negativity—what it is not, and how invisible and unverbalizable it is. In that sense, the debating process of the ideal echoes negative theology. The very word that Tsubouchi coined, "the submerged ideal" (*botsurisō*) in order to conversely shed light on "the infinite, bottomless absolute" nature of the ideal epitomizes this point.

In the first half of this chapter, I further investigate these points: how Tsubouchi and Mori were similarly conceptualizing literature's universality, how both of them rhetorically affirmed universality through negativity. More specifically, I place emphasis on how their exchanges remained extremely abstract and circuitous. As I mentioned before, the conception of universality evolved in this historical moment required these intellectuals to evade concretization of whatever they were pursuing in the name of the ideal. Thus, continuing to stay on the abstract level and engaging with prolonged discussions were an integral part of the individuation process of Japanese literature, posited as a particularized, nationalized incarnation of universality.

The latter half of this chapter examines how their exchanges of criticism invited a remarkably unhistorical ending. Mori's aggressive criticism prompted Tsubouchi's reactionary mobilization of a certain writing style that was labeled as premodern, hence uncivilized at that time. Tsubouchi's counter-criticism produced in that style gradually began to develop a scenario that was distinctly unfit and adverse to the context of Meiji Japan: A rising modern nation, state, and empire with the emperor at its top. In order to demonstrate such an unwitting unfolding of the debate, this chapter spends much of its space in detailing what each discussant said, in what manner.

Let me begin by displaying how the submerged ideal was rhetorically posited by Tsubouchi and how Mori reacted to that. I extensively quote their writings below, in order to demonstrate what part of the submerged ideal theory invited a staging of conflict between these two intellectuals.

Tsubouchi's neologism "the submerged ideal" began to appear in his writings around 1891.¹⁷⁹ Tsubouchi around this time wrote multiple essays, emphasizing how criticism needs to be impersonal and impartial and leave possibilities of interpretation wide open. What he calls "inductive criticism" (*kinō hihyō*) that prioritizes description over interpretation is one way to achieve such disinterested criticism.¹⁸⁰ The rhetoric of the submerged ideal was introduced in this context as a way to express unlimited potentials for interpretation. If any

179. According to Tsubouchi's recollection, he coined this term "in the spring of 1891." Tsubouchi, "Botsurisō no yurai" ("The Origin of the Submerged Ideal"), *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892): 176.

180. Tsubouchi, "Azusamiko" ("Shrine Maiden") tenth entry, June 17, 1891, appendix 1. "Azusamiko" is serialized in *Yomiuri shinbun* from May 15 through June 17, 1891. The essay sets up a pensive narrator "I=*onore*," who goes to see a shrine maiden for consultation and caricatures Meiji Japan's writing practices and practitioners (Mori Ōgai/Rintarō, Uchida Fuchian, Ken'yūsha School, and Tsubouchi himself, among others).

attempt of interpretation necessarily resulted in the drowning of whoever is making such an effort in the "bottomless lake," Tsubouchi's theory unfolds, what is left for those who still wish to engage with masterpieces would be to take a distance from the all-encompassing lake and devote themselves to objective description of what appears on the surface of the lake.¹⁸¹ Although Tsubouchi does not articulate this, the submerged ideal from the beginning entailed twofold meanings: one as an attribute of masterpieces whose vast capacity, allowing any reading possible, denies being reduced to one single interpretation, and, the other as a methodology that critics need to employ by not enforcing a single perspective upon texts.

The rhetoric of the submerged ideal soon came back when Tsubouchi launched an annotation project of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* in journal *Waseda bungaku* for which he served a chief editor. Naming two possible methods to evaluate texts, Tsubouchi writes in his prefatory note:

Annotating words' meanings and grammatical rules as they are, ranging over rhetoric, is one method. Unraveling authors' true intention or ideal that appear in their works so as to make evaluative comments is another. Although at first I thought I would mainly employ the second method of analysis, I had a second thought and decided that I would rather choose the former method. The reason why I do so is that the second method of analysis, that is, "interpretation" can be considerably touching and beneficial for readers when it is done by someone highly insightful. But when it is done by someone without discernment, it may run a risk of driving careless readers into impossible misunderstanding, by interpreting a cat and describing it as a tiger. This can happen because Shakespeare's works are extremely similar to nature. . . . I say that Shakespeare's works extremely look like nature, not because the events and people that he describes are the same as those in reality, but because the ways in which his works can be interpreted in any possible ways in readers' minds are

181. According to Tsubouchi, masterpieces manifest beauty because they accept any interpretation from anyone from any time period like a never-saturated "lake that does not know its bottom." Tsubouchi, "Bunkai meisho sokoshirazu no mizuumi" ("The Lake That Does Not Know Its Bottom"), in *Yomiuri shinbun 4866 gō furoku* (Tokyo: Nisshūsha, 1891), 1–17. As the metaphor of the "bottomless lake" already suggests, Tsubouchi's concept of great literature in a sense preempts the possibility of interpretation as a mode of criticism; interpretation as criticism becomes engulfed, annihilated by the bottomless lake (masterpieces).

exactly like God's creation. . . . The divine creation thoroughly accepts myriads of interpretation of all and still has much room. . . . His [Shakespeare's] masterpieces appear as though there was still much room after containing almost any kinds of ideals, and, this is where his works come to look like the true character of the divine creation.¹⁸²

Tsubouchi repeats that critics should not impose a single, biased interpretation onto such masterpieces as Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, nor should they delimit possible interpretations of them, because those works can be read in any number of ways, regardless of who is reading, when, and in what location. Don't bear your own ideal in mind upon encountering masterpieces that would accept unlimited ideals, and, let your own ideal be submerged in bottomless, all-inclusive masterpieces, because "there is absolutely no call for analyzing works of the submerged ideal by mobilizing the ideal."¹⁸³

The theory of the submerged ideal triggered multiple reactions among intellectuals. Iwamoto Yoshiharu, for instance, understood the submerged ideal as the absence of the ideal and completely disagreed with Tsubouchi.¹⁸⁴ Terayama Seisen rephrased the submerged ideal as an "essential body of the universe" and as "the ideal that takes a shape of the absolute," and openly complemented Tsubouchi's neologism.¹⁸⁵

182. Tsubouchi, "Shēkusupiya kyakuhon hyōchū" ("Critical Annotations of Shakespeare's Script"), *Waseda bungaku* 1 (October 20, 1891): 3–5.

183. Ibid., 10. Tsubouchi mobilized the rhetoric of the submerged ideal again in the mission statement of "Jibun hyōron" ("Critical Discussions on Contemporary Writings") column in *Waseda bungaku*. The column simply aims to describe "facts" and "real happenings" in the contemporary scene of writing without being judgmental, specifically in order to avoid enforcing narrow preconceptions, says Tsubouchi. This is because, according to Tsubouchi, judgments should be inside readers' "submerged ideal"-istic state of mind. Tsubouchi, "Ware ni arazushite nanji ni ari" ("Not on Me, But on You"), *Waseda bungaku* 3 (November 15, 1891): 1–3. In the debate against Mori, this column served as Tsubouchi's main platform.

184. Iwamoto, "Shekusupia no risō" ("Shakespeare's Ideals"), *Jogaku zasshi* 290 (November 7, 1891): 5–7.

185. Terayama, "Tsubouchi Shōyōshi no botsurisō ben o yomu" ("Reading Mr. Tsubouchi Shōyō's Claim on the Submerged Ideal"), *Jōnan hyōron* 1 (March 21, 1892): 2–9. Seisen goes further to argue that the submerged ideal is direct, mimetic representation of reality based on "observation" and "experimentation." Tsubouchi later says that Seisen completely misunderstands the submerged ideal, and that Seisen's interpretation of the submerged ideal constitutes a true opposition to Hartmann, in that Seisen believes in the

Among others, the most harsh reaction to the submerged ideal theory came from Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. Drawing heavily on nineteenth-century German philosopher Eduard von Hartmann's aesthetic theory, Mori began to rigorously attack Tsubouchi.¹⁸⁶ While admitting the importance of "inductive criticism" for its "scientific methodology," Mori asks: "Nonetheless, when one is going to make a judgment after finishing observation and research, shouldn't there be the ideal? Shouldn't there be some standard?"¹⁸⁷ For Mori, the prioritization of description-based inductive criticism is simply irresponsible and erroneous, when the world is "not only filled with the real (*jitsu/reaaru/Reale*) but also full of the idea (*sō/ideen/Ideen*)."¹⁸⁸ Theorists' mission in such a world is to unearth "the reason behind beauty" as opposed to the vocation of describers who just "record beauty."¹⁸⁹ The submerged ideal as an attribute of masterpieces is also called into question, because Mori conceived the ideal to be what mediates creators and the realm of "*Das Absolute (taikyo)*, the unconscious" from which beauty emerges.¹⁹⁰ Mori eventually relabeled the submerged ideal as the "negation of subjective views" (*botsu-shukan*), "negation of inserting self-commentary" (*botsu-sōhyō*), "negation of generic ideas" (*botsu-ruisō*), and "negation of

complete absence of the ideal while Hartmann in the existence of the ideal. This claim shows how Tsubouchi's submerged ideal is not identical to the ideal's non-existence. Tsubouchi, "Jōnan Hyōron jōshu to Shōyōshi tonō pārē" ("The Parley Between the Load of Jōnan Hyōron Castle and Shōyōshi"), *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892): 7–16.

186. Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906). During the debate, Mori referred to Hartmann's "*muishiki no tetsugaku*," i.e., *Philosophy of the Unconscious* (1869).

187. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono ichi, Shōyōshi no shinsaku jūnibanchū kihatsu shiban gōhyō, 'Baika shishū' hyō oyobi 'Azusamiko'" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: First Entry, Shōyō's Collective Reviews on Already-Published Four out of Twelve New Works, 'Baika's Poetry Anthology' criticism and 'Shrine Maiden'"), *Shigarami zōshi* 24 (September 25, 1891): 14.

188. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono shichi, *Waseda bungaku* no botsurisō" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Seventh Entry, *Waseda bungaku*'s Submerged Ideal"), *Shigarami zōshi* 27 (December 25, 1891): 5. "Uyū" is a set phrase of rhetorical question that means nothing or non-existence.

189. Ibid., 4.

190. Ibid., 7.

preconception" (*botsu-seishin*), entirely rejecting the ways in which this neologism was put in use as rhetoric to discuss literature.¹⁹¹

Contrary to Mori's fierce public accusation, Tsubouchi humbly admitted that he had failed to present the submerged ideal in an intelligible manner in his previous attempts and briefly restated what he had meant to convey: First, interpretation with lesser ideals is unnecessary when Shakespeare's masterpieces are examined, and second, being satisfied with lesser ideals while not reflecting on other perspectives is erroneous as critics.¹⁹²

Confirming that the submerged ideal does not at all mean the absence of the ideal but contrarily points to the existence of the enormous ideal, Tsubouchi confessed that proposing the submerged ideal was his "desperate expedient" as he would never be able to reach the enormous ideal of Shakespeare's masterpieces no matter what.¹⁹³

Mori, however, ignored Tsubouchi's apologetic remark and instead went even further to equate the submerged ideal to Zola's naturalism: "[Tsubouchi's] the submerged-idealistic nature extremely looks like Zola's nature."¹⁹⁴ In the similar way that Mori attacked Iwamoto Yoshiharu's "nature," Mori problematized Tsubouchi's submerged ideal by mobilizing Zola and underlined his disapproval of Zolaist naturalism as a constituent of linguistic beauty.¹⁹⁵

191. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono shichi furoku, sono gen o torazu" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Seventh Entry, Appendix, Won't Take His Words"), *Shigarami zōshi* 27 (December 25, 1891): 9–10.

192. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni shasu" ("Thanking Uyū Sensei"), *Waseda bungaku* 7 (January 15, 1892): 16–17.

193. *Ibid.*, 16–17.

194. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono kyū, Emiru Zora ga botsurisō" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Ninth Entry, Emile Zola's Submerged Ideal"), *Shigarami zōshi* 28 (January 25, 1892): 24.

195. Immediately after "Emiru Zora ga botsurisō," Mori re-listed revised version of "Shōsetsuron" ("Theory of the Novel"), "Bungaku to shizen' o yomu" ("Reading 'Literature and Nature'"), and "Futatabi shizen sūhaisha ni tadau" ("Asking the Nature Worshipper Again") so as to further enforce the rendition of Zolaism onto Tsubouchi. See Mori, *Shigarami zōshi* 28 (January 25, 1892): respectively 24–25, 25–29, 29–30.

Accusing Tsubouchi's inability to construct logically intelligible arguments,¹⁹⁶ Mori ultimately convicted Tsubouchi as a "masked Zola."¹⁹⁷

Tsubouchi once again explained the gist of his theory: Despite the word's ambivalence, his submerged ideal is not identical to the lack of the ideal but is synonymous with the burial of the ideal, i.e., the ideal that exists but does not reveal itself. Any ideal could be buried in divinely created nature whose capacity is unlimited, the state of which is the submerged ideal.¹⁹⁸ Stressing that Mori completely misunderstood the submerged ideal,¹⁹⁹ Tsubouchi explained that his prioritization of the description-based criticism came from his attempt to efface his own ideals as he could not figure out how to reach the enormous ideal yet.²⁰⁰ Tsubouchi's explanation on his strong belief in the existence of literature's ideal could not be any more articulate than this.

196. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono jūichi, *Waseda bungaku* no bokkyaku-risō" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Eleventh Entry, *Waseda bungaku*'s Effaced Ideal), *Shigarami zōshi* 30 (March 25, 1892): 1.

197. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono jūni, Shōyōshi to Uyū Sensei to" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Twelfth Entry, Shōyō and Uyū Sensei), *Shigarami zōshi* 30 (March 25, 1892): 33. Mori likened Tsubouchi to Zola a few years earlier in "Gendai shoka no shōsetsuron o yomu" ("Reading Contemporary Critics' Theories of the Novel"), *Shigarami zōshi* 2 (November 25, 1889). Mori's forcible association between Tsubouchi and Zola can be considered the earliest example of how Tsubouchi was interpreted as the origin of mimetic realism in Japan.

198. Tsubouchi, "Botsurisō no gōgi o benzu" ("Explaining the Definition of the Submerged Ideal"), *Waseda bungaku* 8 (January 30, 1892): 1–5. On a side note, it is noteworthy that the same issue of *Waseda bungaku* includes Noah Webster's definition of literature as follows:

Literature, in its widest sense, embraces all compositions in writing or print which preserve the results of observation, thought or fancy; but those upon the positive sciences (mathematics, etc.) are usually excluded. It is often confined, however, to *belles-letters*, or works of taste and sentiment, as poetry, eloquence, history, etc., excluding abstract discussions and mere erudition.

Webster's mentioning of "positive sciences" and "abstract discussions and mere erudition" that are "excluded" from literature is obviously used to show *Waseda bungaku*'s disapproval of Mori's debating technics.

199. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono ichi)" ("Answering Uyū Sensei, Part One") and "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono ni)" ("Answering Uyū Sensei, Part Two"), *Waseda bungaku* 9 (February 15, 1892): 1–12. Also see Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono san)" ("Answering Uyū Sensei, Part Three") and "Sono i wa tagaeri" ("Its Meaning is Different"), *Waseda bungaku* 10 (February 29, 1892): 1–20.

200. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono ni)," 12. Also see Tsubouchi, "Sono i wa tagaeri," 18.

Nonetheless, Mori did not accommodate Tsubouchi's explanatory gestures at all. Mori continued to dissect Tsubouchi's theory into minute details, reductively reinterpreted them, found logical defects one after another, and disproved the submerged ideal theory thoroughly. Mori's almost blind denial to listen to Tsubouchi again drove the latter into repeating himself.²⁰¹ The point at which they disagree from each other thus remained obscured from the surface of their verbal exchanges. The result was mere tautology. Their interactions were almost unnecessarily elongated, and, the moment of elucidation was continuously deferred. The debate eventually assumed an appearance of logic for logic's sake, debate for debate's sake, only to sustain the configuration of an antithesis between them. The prolonged discussion was carried on until Tsubouchi finally proposed a suspension of the battle in a jocular manner—the battle for which they did not articulate, if not could not even locate, what underlies their disagreement.

In fact, Tsubouchi and Mori were not entirely disagreeing with each other. The typical scholarship on the negation of the ideal debate took it for granted that Tsubouchi and Mori were in an antithetical relationship, without considering how the "antithesis" itself came into being. Based on the premise of fundamental differences between these two intellectuals, many scholars made efforts to identify "meanings" behind their opposition.²⁰²

201. Tsubouchi asked Mori several times to further clarify what exactly they are disagreeing with. See Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono san)," 15, and "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu" ("Dispatching a Horse at the Head of the Army and Addressing the Enemy General") that appears in *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892): 1–7.

Later Tsubouchi says that Mori's attack is based on "imagination," "speculation," and "drastic misunderstanding." Tsubouchi, "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi" ("Lay-priest Common Sense's War Council"), *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892): 25.

202. Sakai Takeshi's recent book is a typical example; the entire book is dedicated to the analyses of "meanings" behind authors and texts surrounding the debate. Sakai, *Botsurisō ronsō to sono eikyō* (*The Negation of the Ideal Debate and its Influences*) (Kyoto: Bukkyō Daigaku Shibunkaku Shuppan, 2016). Similarly, Togawa Shinsuke tries to "resolve" the confusion on behalf of the debaters. Togawa, "Dorama"."takai", 154–169. Such an approach to determine what the debaters meant by the ideal is premised upon the belief that there is "meaning," i.e., a fixed point, that is to be located.

For instance, Kamei Shino locates the source of differences between Tsubouchi and Mori in their background training and education. While her methodology is informational and helpful to a large extent, her frequent references to the debaters' "interiority" may not only treat these writers as a fixed locus of meanings, but also underline the configuration of the antithesis that often positioned "Tsubouchi who inherits Japanese traditions" in direct opposition to "Mori who is heavily influenced by the West."²⁰³ It is necessary to remember that an antithesis is not a given, but often configured as such through staging. This is more so in the case of debates. Regarding the Tsubouchi-Mori controversy as an antithesis is, therefore, already buying into and even reinscribing the configuration that the debaters were rhetorically setting in motion.

The reading of the debate I wish to suggest concerns less with "meanings" that are drawn from a fixed locus, be it debaters or texts, but more with what the verbal exchange throughout the debate ends up revealing and simultaneously concealing in its own unfolding. I owe much of my thinking of the negation of the ideal debate to Kojin Karatani's insights. His revisionist analyses portray how the debate itself becomes linguistically and performatively construed as such. Karatani argues in a following manner:

What I want to point out is that it was Ōgai who took a position of opposition in this debate and who formulated the problem. He took all that coexisted as difference and diversity in the second decade of Meiji—all that Shōyō had affirmed in his conception of submerged ideals—and out of it structured an opposition.²⁰⁴

203. Kamei brings Tsubouchi's "inner world" and Mori's "mentality" into her discussion so as to explain why they act in a certain way. Kamei, "'Bibun Ten'nō' to 'Kan'non': Tsubouchi Shōyō tai Mori Ōgai 'Botsurisō ronsō' ni tsuite" ("Emperor Bibun' and 'Kan'non': Tsubouchi Shōyō v.s. Mori Ōgai, Regarding the 'Negation of the Ideal Debate'"), *Hokkaidō daigaku bungakubu kiyō* (The Annual Reports on Cultural Science) 47, no. 1 (October 1998).

204. Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. and ed. Brett de Bary (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 150–151.

What Karatani is demonstrating here is indicative that differences have no inherent necessity to be positioned antithetically until they are made so. Despite that, with his rhetorical performance, Mori framed differences between Tsubouchi and himself as an antithesis and forcibly invited responses from Tsubouchi.²⁰⁵ In fact, the confrontation between these two intellectuals regarding literature's ideal may have been less about their differences but more about their closeness. It was clearly not Mori alone that Tsubouchi had in mind when the latter proposed the submerged ideal theory. Likewise, it could have been something other than Tsubouchi and his submerged ideal theory that Mori was confronting during the debate. The ambiguity of the terminology and elongated discussions all the more emphasized their rivalry, while overshadowing their commonality.

To reiterate: Tsubouchi and Mori came extremely close when it comes to theorizing literature. Both of them were conceptualizing a single, universal origin of literature through the rhetoric of the ideal. Furthermore, they employed a very similar pattern in which they made their claims about the ideal: namely, affirmation of the ideal, i.e., universal origin of literature, through negation. Both of them are positive about the existence of the eternal, absolute realm from which literature germinates; yet, they claim so by creating a vacuum, one that is named as the ideal, whose details are never able to become identified nor verbalized. In that sense, my reading positions this debate as a process of negative construction of universality. Such a manner of positing literature's origin is a certainly historically marked move. From here on, I trace how they postulate universality through negativity and contemplate the historical implications of this debate.

205. The configuration of antithesis is repeated and fortified by such scholars as Tanizawa Eiichi. He postulates the "origin" of the antithesis and does not seem to question the formation of the antithetical appearance between Tsubouchi and Mori itself. Tanizawa, "Tsubouchi Shōyō, Mori Ōgai tairitsu no kongen" ("The Origin of the Antithesis between Tsubouchi Shōyō and Mori Ōgai"), *Meiji no bungei hyōron* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1971), 21–39.

In responding to Mori's criticism, Tsubouchi writes, "the submerged ideal is, in other words, having the enormous ideal, and, I set forth the submerged ideal as my desperate expedient because I can never reach the enormous ideal."²⁰⁶ He coined this neologism in order to reject the conception of one fixed ideal that omnisciently penetrates a text and thereby to delineate the enormous ideal by contrast. As Tsubouchi's contemporary Uchida Roan sharply maintained in his initial reaction to the submerged ideal theory, "Harunoya (Tsubouchi) set forth the ideal called the submerged ideal."²⁰⁷ The submerged ideal was thus divulged to be a reverse attempt to reach the enormous ideal precisely by effacing other lesser ideals. Tsubouchi's negative affirmation of the ideal most clearly manifests in one of his explanations of the word's definition.

The divine creation is bottomless and boundless. How can we call this bottomless, boundless thing? Should we name it "enormous mind"? It must be equivalent to saying, "the God's existence." And yet, I am obstinately idiotic and cannot bring myself to believe in the existence of the God. Then should we call it "the enormous ideal"? Still, I am not well-educated and cannot prove what kind of thing "the enormous ideal" is. . . . So I tentatively name it "the submerged ideal." . . . How could we reach this infinite, bottomless absolute? I say: establish a self by withdrawing a self. Discard one ideal and take the submerged ideal as your ideal. Withdraw a self who wants boundaries by persisting with one ideal and establish a self that wants infinity in order to reach the infinite absolute. How do we do that? I answer: the submerged ideal. I am already taking the submerged ideal as my ideal.²⁰⁸

Tsubouchi wonders how to reach the enormous ideal, the bottomless, boundless absolute.

And yet, whether or not there is the enormous ideal is never called into question.

Importantly, this enormous ideal that undoubtedly exists somewhere is postulated through

206. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni shasu," 17.

207. Uchida Roan, "Harunoya manpitsu" ("Random Thoughts on Harunoya [Shōyō]"), *Kokumin shinbun*, October 15, 1891, 1.

208. Tsubouchi, "Botsurisō no gogi o benzu," 2.

the form of negation as the unknowable, undefinable, unverbalizable. There is only negativity in how Tsubouchi posits his submerged ideal. This ideal needs to be submerged in order to manifest its existence. Such negativity entailed in Tsubouchi's submerged ideal is even identified by Mori, who says: "No one would ever be able to defeat Shōyō. . . , the reason why it would not be defeated is not because there is something undefeatable, but because the thing to be defeated cannot be seen."²⁰⁹

Mori, on the other hand, advocated the existence of a transcendental origin of beauty that becomes materialized in literature since his "Shōsetsuron" ("Theory of the Novel"). In that sense, his theory of literature had little to do with negativity. And yet, the ways in which he constructed such an origin through the rhetoric of the ideal only trace a contour of a circle, whose center is left devoid of positivity. During the debate Tsubouchi asked Mori many times with clarity to elaborate what constitutes the ideal for the latter, saying:

I, who proposed the submerged ideal, have never said that there is absolutely no ideal in this world, nor have I determined that the world is full of ideas. Uyū Sensei is different; he is confident in the abundance of ideas. . . . Sensei has already grasped the enormous ideal, and that is why he is willing to wield his pen dedicated to theory, . . . , if I hear more deeply about Sensei's philosophy and understand the reason why ideas are abundant, and, if I can reach the point of believing it, I will discard my pen dedicated to description, follow Sensei's back, and compose writings so as to assail heresy and reveal truth.²¹⁰

It is not that I do not believe that the origin of Sensei's aesthetics is profound and delicate. It is just that, because I am not well-informed about Hartmann yet, I cannot clearly understand the relationship between so-called the idea and the real. No. I can indistinctly see how intellect and mind in the unconscious engenders the universe. However, I still cannot comprehend the philosophical reason for its ultimate

209. Mori, "Sanbō ronbun: sono jūsan, *Waseda bungaku* no kō-botsurisō" ("Thesis Written at a Mountain Villa: Thirteenth Entry, *Waseda bungaku*'s Post-Submerged-Ideal Theory"), *Shigarami zōshi* 33 (June 25, 1892): 21. Mori already noted Tsubouchi's negative affirmation of the ideal: "Shōyō talks about effacing the ideal. Then, what is this ideal that is to be effaced?" Mori, "*Waseda bungaku* no bokkyaku-risō," 1.

210. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono ni)," 11–12. Note that the idea (*sō*) and the ideal (*risō*) are used interchangeably.

purpose, let alone how the philosophy of the unconscious that was brought about through Sensei's consciousness takes its form. Is the unconscious spirit that you mention an objective entity? What is its ultimate purpose for creating the universe? For what did it create the consciousness? Sensei, I beg you to teach me.²¹¹

Despite these repetitive requests from Tsubouchi, Mori never articulates what he means by the ideal and how it becomes concretized. Instead, Mori's response blandly goes:

Shōyō asks, "what is the ultimate purpose of relative phenomena engendered from the absolute corpus." If Hartmann/Uyū Sensei heard this, he would simply say, "read my philosophy of the unconscious."²¹²

Mori's ideal thus remains hollow and invisible.

Furthermore, Mori eventually ends up disclosing the instability of what he says about the ideal. In the same essay quoted above, Mori writes: "I am not Uyū Sensei; I just wrote a criticism about the submerged ideal, conjecturing what Sensei would have said upon hearing Tsubouchi's words."²¹³ Such a statement exhibits that in Mori's logic there is a very fine line among Hartmann's philosophy, Mori's understanding of Hartmann's philosophy, and Mori's speculation of what Hartmann's philosophy would say to Tsubouchi in the name of Uyū Sensei. Mori assumes Hartmann's voice and presents the figure of Uyū Sensei to the extent that he does not quite distinguish his mobilization of Hartmann in the debate from Hartmann's philosophy itself. Yet, that Mori does not answer directly to Tsubouchi's question reveals that Mori is not Hartmann, that Mori is not even a surrogate of Hartmann, and perhaps unexpectedly that there is no necessity of making Hartmann

211. Tsubouchi, "Uyū Sensei ni kotau (sono san)," 15–16.

212. Mori, "Shōyōshi to Uyū Sensei to," 34.

213. Ibid., 20.

intervene in Mori's battle with Tsubouchi. A fissure among the triad of Mori, Uyū Sensei, and Hartmann is thus divulged, which accordingly sheds light on the insecurity of Mori's own standpoint as well as what he says about the ideal.

Seeing Mori's indirect refusal, Tsubouchi tries to bring their discussion on the more concrete level and pushes Mori to speak of the essence of his ideal by interpreting Shakespeare. Tsubouchi states:

Shōyō has not yet ascertained Shakespeare's subjective ideal, and that is why Shōyō only deals with the objective aspect of Shakespeare's work. That is to say, the former has not clarified the latter's work's origin. . . . , that is why Shōyō wants to hear in detail how General Ōgai interprets Shakespeare.²¹⁴

What our party has been wishing to know is not about the abstract discussion of how you see the ideal but concerned with the question of what kind of ideal you are seeing, General, please generalize [Shakespeare's] ideal in detail, analyze it, and show evidences from at least six or seven works, provide your grounds, and then condemn the wrongdoing of our party.²¹⁵

Nonetheless, Mori only continues to delineate the circumference of the ideal without verbalizing what substantiates it. Adjudging Tsubouchi's ideal to be a mere "personal philosophical view" that "resides outside the boundary of aesthetics," Mori ultimately proposes:

If Shōyō wants to ask me what kind of thing the ideal is, I will simply answer that it is the ideal as used in metaphysics in the nineteenth Christian century.

Regarding the word the ideal I use, it is not difficult, nor is it hard to describe. If I want to put it simply, I can say that it is a thought that is not limited by time, one that

214. Tsubouchi, "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu," 3.

215. Tsubouchi, "Gazokusecchūnosuke ga gunbai" ("Gazokusecchūnosuke's Verdict"), *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892): 16–17.

permeates all beauty, be it naturally-created or artificially-made. Or I can also say that it is logic of the world of aesthetics.²¹⁶

These statements may seem to be providing the ground definition of his ideal. Nonetheless, his gesture to explain his own position never rises above the level of tautology. It appears as if Mori based his theory of the ideal on aesthetics, and yet, his statement is not at all spelling out what aesthetics or beauty is: The ideal is beauty, and beauty is the ideal. His language only circumvents the ideal without providing the substance of it.

The debate only proceeds abstractly and circularly, walking along the circumference of the ideal without ever stepping into what is inside. The implication of their circular discussion is not that the ideal is difficult to identify, but rather that there is no "inside." Tsubouchi and Mori seem to be in an antagonistic relationship, as Tsubouchi concisely formulates: Mori "who sees the ideal" and himself "who doesn't."²¹⁷ Despite this appearance, however, their ideals are only negatively affirmed, together creating a vacuum and simultaneously contributing to the reinforcement of what they are creating.

The interesting irony is that, through delineating the ideal only negatively and creating a vacuum for that, the exchanges between Tsubouchi and Mori ended up enacting the negation of the ideal itself. In his final confrontation with Tsubouchi, Mori says:

Generally speaking, the range that criticism's power can cover cannot exceed the scope of verbalized argument that is to be criticized. . . . If criticizing what is expressed through language is considered misunderstanding, criticism assumes a meaning of scrutiny of the obscured, diverges from the boundary of ratiocination, and eventually ends up going beyond the range of logic.²¹⁸

216. Mori, "*Waseda bungaku no kō-botsurisō*," 5–24.

217. Tsubouchi, "*Gazokusecchūnosuke ga gunbai*," 13.

218. Mori, "*Waseda bungaku no kō-botsurisō*," 3.

Mori blames Tsubouchi that, despite the term's ambiguity, Tsubouchi did not define how the submerged ideal was to be used in the beginning, and that this initial absence of verbalization triggered the debate. However, while saying that criticism can only investigate what is verbalized, the correspondences between Tsubouchi and Mori "diverges from the boundary of ratiocination, and eventually end up going beyond the range of logic," in that they thoroughly evaded the intervention of verbalism in defining the ideal. Rejecting the verbalization of the ideal, or in other words, leaving the ideal unmediated by linguistic definition paradoxically predicated what Tsubouchi called the burial of the ideal—the ideal that undoubtedly exists but does not reveal itself nonetheless.²¹⁹

Given that both Tsubouchi and Mori are conceiving the origin of literature through negativity, it is necessary to contemplate what necessitated such positing of the ideal as a vacuum at this historical moment. I argue that the negative construction of the ideal is profoundly tied to a call for universality. The deferred, elongated discussion only traces the contour of the ideal, and as a result, the ideal remains abstract. That Tsubouchi and Mori raise the ideal as something unverbalizable, that which cannot be grasped through already existing words, all the more intensifies its abstractness. Precisely because it is left on the level of abstraction, the rhetoric of the ideal becomes activated as a repository of the non-concrete. At the same time, the abstractness of the ideal permits discussants to evade engaging in specifics. The conversation is allowed to stay conceptual, without being

219. That they never verbalized what lies at the core of literature, i.e., what is obscured under the name of the ideal helped literature in Japan be continuously topicalized and sustained as an incarnation of universality in the form of a national particular. Numerous debates about literature took place in and since the Meiji period. Throughout those debates, that literature is universal, and that Japanese literature embodies that universality were never really questioned. Again, I am not saying that it is problematic. What I wish to underline is the generality of this mechanism in attempts to locate the quintessence of the universal-national.

necessarily nailed down to a particular, be it temporal or spatial. This abstractness rendered to the ideal paradoxically guarantees universality, in that it functions to accept anything non-concrete that is not bound to temporal or spatial localness.

Throughout the debate, the ideal in their own works never became a point of contention. Tsubouchi could have asked about Mori's ideal in "The Dancing Girl," for instance. Likewise, Mori could have drawn on many of Tsubouchi's works to problematize the latter's ideal. They had every reason to deal with the ideal in the examples of their own creations. However, they never did. The absence of their own works in the debate may be revealing how those examples needed to be carefully avoided; that way their discussion on the ideal is allowed to remain abstract without yielding anything concrete, thereby guaranteeing the base upon which universality is claimed in the name of the ideal.²²⁰

Neither Tsubouchi nor Mori pinned down the ideal throughout the debate. In many ways, it was required that they did not do so and kept their ideals unidentified, because otherwise they could immediately become entrapped in local, possibly "uncivilized" specificities. In order for their attempts to pursue a universal origin of literature to be successful, being locatable both temporally and spatially could dismantle the very efforts. At one point during the debate, Mori underlines how he resists locality: "I do not translate 'unreal' as *kyo*, but as *hi-jitsu* (what is not real). This is because I dislike how the *kyo-jitsu* pair has been abused by theorists in my country and China."²²¹ This statement typifies how seeking universality was possible only by being disconnected from "Japan" or "China."

220. I mentioned in a note in the previous chapter that Mori was confronted by Ishibashi Ningetsu regarding two short stories "Utakata no ki" ("The Account of Fleeting Bubbles") and "Fumizukai" ("The Letter Bearer") that the former published in succession to "Maihime" ("The Dancing Girl"). Ningetsu's repetitive confrontations with Mori in a sense gestured criticism's seeking the relationship between the ideal (beauty) and actual works of literature, in addition to its continuous attempt to secure its meta-ness.

221. Mori, "*Waseda bungaku no kō-botsurisō*," 11.

Neither one of these locations was considered an achiever of high civilization, no matter how imaginary such civilizational hierarchy could have been. When being "Japanese" or "Chinese" was marked as local, i.e., a sign of the opposite of civilization, remaining abstract became a necessity so that it could provide a storehouse of non-localness, namely, universality. The abstractness of the ideal was thus an indispensable part of the debate, with which the debaters became able to approach literature as a vehicle to incarnate universality.

To reiterate: this universality claimed through literature's ideal is not a priori, but inevitably marked with temporal and spatial specificity, in that it took "the West," perceived as the achiever of the highest of civilization, as its standard. What this means is that at this historical moment "Japan" positioned itself in relation to "the West," defining itself through similarities with, or rather, by the distance or divergence from the latter. When Tsubouchi lamented the "immaturity" of domestic novel-writing practices, he was already postulating the "mature" version of it that existed elsewhere, in "the West."²²² It is not a coincidence that Shakespeare and Hartmann served a backbone of Tsubouchi and Mori's ideals. It needed to be non-Japanese, "Western" individuals who serve as an embodiment of literature's universal ideal.²²³ That during the debate Mori once described the realm of "the unconscious" where the ideal germinates as "*Das Absolute*" (*taikyo*) dually articulates how

222. Tsubouchi, "Shinsaku jūniban no uchi kihatsu yonban gōhyō" ("Collective Reviews on Already-Published Four out of Twelve New Works"), *Yomiuri shinbun*, December 10, 1890, 2. This is the fourth entry of the essay, serialized in *Yomiuri shinbun* from December 7 to December 15, 1890. Later the entire essay is edited and renamed as "Shōsetsu sanpa" ("Three Groups of *Shōsetsu*").

223. That said, this "West" cannot be considered to be a monolithic unit. As I suggested in a note in Introduction, the debate between Tsubouchi and Mori that revolved around the ideal of literature assumes a facade of a surrogate war between the British Empire that was already in bloom and the German Empire that was newly rising. It is possible to think that potential fiction between these two empires was conceived against a backdrop of the degeneration theory. The theory of degeneration was proposed by Max Nordau as a natural, unavoidable consequence of evolution in the early 1890s, and, it conveyed a terrifying message especially to those who considered themselves already civilized. Mori's recourse to German aesthetic theory in his attack against Tsubouchi/Shakespeare thus demonstrates one manifestation of the conflict latent in "the West."

historically-charged this universality was; first, the ideal that is absolutely unchangeable over time across space is required to be conjured in association with literature in Meiji Japan, and second, that absolute needs to be articulated through German language.²²⁴

What needs to be reemphasized is that the ideal of this nationalized particular, i.e., literature in Japan that is posited as something that incarnates universality, is never located when it is being contested. As the abstractness and circuitousness of the Tsubouchi-Mori debate illuminate, the basis that guarantees this particular—the ideal with which literature is supposed to germinate—is not identified nor even verbalized. The implication of this unlocatability is not negligible, in that the moment of literature's realization can be infinitely suspended and postponed, with its origin being left unidentified. The deferral of the point of realization may instigate more discussions about the particular, and as a result, further contributes to its discursive proliferation. I need to stress that I am not making an extremist claim that "there is no Japanese literature" here. What I am pointing to is that, whenever the identify of Japanese literature is called into question, the answer can never be located at a single point. Both that there occurred countless debates about the limits of literature in and since the Meiji period, and that those debates more or less revolved around the question of literature's universality, together exemplify how unstable Japanese literature's identity is, and, how that unidentifiability is actually an integral, structural part of literature's sustenance.

The negation of the ideal debate was indeed a historically-determined event, in terms of how it topicalized universality that is to be manifested in the form of literature and

224. Mori, "*Waseda bungaku no botsurisō*," 7.

how the discussion proceeded by negatively constructing that universality. The two discussants' postulation of the universal origin of literature was never free from the peculiar condition in which they were situated, i.e., Meiji Japan where Japanese literature was imagined and pursued as title to civilization. However, in its very unfolding, the criticism that Tsubouchi and Mori produced in the debate prompted rather unhistorical discordance that eludes their own attempts to justify universality through literature.

The important juncture arises from a series of essays that Tsubouchi presented in response to Mori's "Shōyōshi to Uyū Sensei to" ("Shōyō and Uyū Sensei"). Provoked by Mori's persistent accusation, Tsubouchi published the following essays in rapid succession through *Waseda bungaku*:

- "Waseda Bungaku-gayatsu Jibun Hyōron-mura no engi" ("The History of Jibun Hyōron Village in Waseda Bungaku Valley")
- "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru" ("The Enemy Forces Approaching from the East and the West")
- "Botsurisō no yurai" ("The Origin of the Negated Ideal")
- "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu" ("Dispatching a Horse at the Head of the Army and Addressing the Enemy General")
- "Jōnan Hyōron jōshu to Shōyōshi tonon pāre" ("The Parley Between the Lord of Jōnan Hyōron Castle and Shōyō")
- "Gazokusecchūnosuke ga gunbai" ("Gazokusecchūnosuke's Verdict")
- "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi" ("Lay-priest Common Sense's War Council")
- "Monju Bosatsu no gōiken" ("Bodhisattva Monju's Strong Opinion")
- "Shōyōshi ga yabumi" ("Shepherd Shōyō's Letter Affixed to an Arrow")²²⁵

225. Tsubouchi's series of essays appear chronologically as follows:

- "Waseda Bungaku-gayatsu Jibun Hyōron-mura no engi" and "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru," *Waseda bungaku* 12 (March 30, 1892): respectively 17–19 and 20–23.
- "Botsurisō no yurai," *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892): 169–190. This one is not written in *gibun* style.
- "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu," and "Jōnan Hyōron jōshu to Shōyōshi tonon pāre," *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892): respectively 1–7 and 7–16.

All of these essays, except "Botsurisō no yurai," are written in the so-called *gibun* (playful writing) style. Tsubouchi produced such essays as "Bunkai meisho sokoshirazu no mizuumi" and "Azusamiko" in a similar, allegorical, and self-mocking *gibun* style preceding to the development of the debate on the negated ideal.²²⁶ In that sense, that Tsubouchi employed playful writing for these essays in his confrontation with Mori may not seem strange. In fact, Tsubouchi's recourse to this style towards the end of the debate did not receive positive evaluations from many scholars, who regarded Tsubouchi's jocular essays as his passive attempt to dodge into humor in order to evade the rigorous attack from Mori.²²⁷ Provided that *gibun* was one of the writing practices that came to be labeled as "falsehood" and hence "pre-civilizational" and excluded from the category of a modern, aesthetic literature during this time, and that Tsubouchi himself labeled *gibun* (*gesaku*) as a premodern precursor of the modern novel in his *Shōsetsu shinzui*, his turning to this particular style offered enough reason for his contemporaries and scholars from later periods to belittle these essays.

Nonetheless, I underline the necessity to take these writings seriously. One rationale is that Tsubouchi did resort to *gibun* to counter Mori, in spite of his own downplaying of it

- "Gazokusecchūnosuke ga gunbai," "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi," "Monju Bosatsu no gōiken," and "Shōyōshi ga yabumi," *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892): respectively 1–22, 22–26, 26–28, and 28–29.

226. "Azusamiko," for instance, self-consciously destabilizes its own credibility. Before the serialization starts, this writing sets itself up as an unidentifiable, uncategorizable in the following manner: "Is this the novel? Nay. Thesis? Nay. Essay? Nay. Parable? Nay." In many ways, such positioning of "Azusamiko" was already anticipating the indivisibility of categories, regardless of how Tsubouchi in his other criticism attempted to divide the novel from other forms of writing. "Shakoku: 'Azusamiko,' Tsubouchi Shōyō saku" ("Announcement: 'Azusamiko' by Tsubouchi Shōyō"), *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 15, 1891, 2.

227. See, Usui, *Kindai bungaku ronsō jō*, 23, Isogai, *Mori Ōgai: Meiji nijūendai o chūshin ni*, 165, and Ishida Tadahiko, *Tsubouchi Shōyō kenkyū* (Fukuoka: Kyūshū Daigaku Shuppankai, 1988), 286. Kamei Shino's study raises an objection to such passive reading of Tsubouchi's *gibun* writings. Kamei, "'Bibun Ten'nō' to 'Kan'non'," 88.

in the context of Meiji Japan that was strongly driven by the civilizational logic. Furthermore, in this very unhistorical move that Tsubouchi made at this moment and its outcome, I observe criticism that was exercising its criticality and disturbing the linear, homogenous flow of history.

The first *gibun* essay "Waseda bungaku-gayatsu jibun hyōron-mura no engi" allegorically sets up *Waseda bungaku*'s editor Tsubouchi and *Shigarami zōshi*'s editor Mori in the medieval-esque age of provincial wars.²²⁸ "The old empire in the East is almost falling apart," and, "such nations as Britain, Holland, and France" are advancing on the East and "opening colonies" everywhere. In that climate, "Jibun Hyōron Village" (Village that Evaluates Contemporary Writings)—village that has the same title assigned to the criticism column in *Waseda bungaku*—comes to be assembled by those who voluntarily gather to become farmers.²²⁹ These farmers are "pacifists," and, "one wish that they always keep in mind is nothing but cultivation of *bibun* (aesthetic writings)."²³⁰ However, the Village is all of the sudden approached by the army of "Mighty General Ōgai, renowned for wisdom and valor," who "marked Jibun Hyōron Village as a nest of heretics and sent a punitive force for the sake of Meiji Bibungaku Emperor (Emperor Meiji Aesthetic Literature)."²³¹ In order to demolish "Jibun Hyōron Village" that is guided by pacifist farmer-shepherd "Shōyō" (a pun that refers to both writer Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō and small sheep), the force led by "General Ōgai" is armed with a variety of weapons: the mixture of "Chinese *mana* characters,

228. In "Jōnan Hyōron jōshu to Shōyōshi tonon pāre," Tsubouchi discloses that his *gibun* essays take as their setting the world of *Taiheiki* (*A Chronicle of the Great Peace*), a semi-historical war tale that is said to be composed in the late fourteenth century.

229. Tsubouchi, "Waseda Bungaku-gayatsu Jibun Hyōron-mura no engi," 17.

230. Ibid., 18.

231. Ibid., 19.

Japanese *kana* alphabets, Japanese *katakana* alphabets, German letters," "philosophy of aesthetics," "banners of philosophy, medicine, *wabun* (Japanese writings), *kanbun* (classical Chinese writings), *kabun* (flamboyant writings), written in letters from all times and places," "weapons like allusion, similes, metaphors that are common in national writings," "apostrophe" that is a "foreign-made broad-axe," and "formidable explosives that should be called satire or contempt."²³²

Observing General Ōgai's unexpected total attack in surprise, Shepherd Shōyō tries to intercept the enemy force with an assemble of Village members. To name major constituents: Chibifude no Matsu (Sentry Worn-out Writing Brush), Jōken Nyūdō (Lay-priest Common Sense), Gazokusecchūnosuke (Assistant Warrior Elegant-Vernacular Eclectic Style), Eigo-Zokugo Kyōdai (the Brothers of English and Vernacular), among others.²³³ Above all, Jōken Nyūdō, upon whom Shepherd Shōyō relies as his informative right hand to a great extent, is armed with multiple dictionaries from different ages and places.²³⁴

Note the metonymic medley of writing styles, devices, and books that Tsubouchi is mobilizing as his allies. Tsubouchi's *gibun* turns into a "medium" itself at this point, in that it conjectures different, catalytic actors in the scene of writing, personifies them, and lets them speak and act under an ahierarchized order. While General Ōgai's weapons are likened

232. Tsubouchi, "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru," 20–21. I roughly translate *wabun* as Japanese writings and *kanbun* as classical Chinese writings for the sake of convenience, and yet, this is of course very reductive, simplistic rendering. For one, *wabun* and *kanbun* are not mutually exclusive. That *kanbun* literally signifies Han-writing does not mean that it is not used in Japan. For further information on the complicated relationship between *wa* and *kan*, see Lurie, *Realms of Literacy*.

233. Tsubouchi, "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru," 20–22.

234. His armer is made out of *Setsuyōshū* (Japanese dictionary originally compiled in the Muromachi Period, 1336–1573), and he is accompanied by worriers Kairyō Hanjirō (the edited volume [of something], personified as a warrior) and Eiwa-jitenzen (English dictionary, also personified as a warrior). Tsubouchi, "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu," 1.

to explosives that are brought into use solely to annihilate the Village, the constituents of Shepherd Shōyō's army are anthropomorphized and designed to behave in a commonsensical manner; they hold meetings and discuss how to proceed the battle reasonably against the formidable rival. The contrast between the General and the Shepherd is more than obvious, and yet, the comical, rhythmical narrative of *gibun* simultaneously alleviates the satirical tone.

General Ōgai and Shepherd Shōyō share a common ground in the sense that both parties aim to cultivate aesthetic literature (*bi-bungaku*) for Emperor Bibun (Emperor Aesthetic Writing [*bi-bun*], the same as Emperor Meiji Aesthetic Literature). However, what divides them is how they position themselves in relation to Emperor Bibun. General Ōgai initiates the battle against the Village in order to eliminate a heretical element for Emperor Bibun. Shepherd Shōyō also acknowledges that the Village aims to cultivate aesthetic literature for the same Emperor. However, Tsubouchi's *gibun* obviously separates General Ōgai from Shepherd Shōyō with regard to how to narrativize each character's relationship with Emperor Bibun; while General Ōgai is depicted as someone who peremptorily assumes the mantle of Emperor Bibun's authority to wage the battle, Shepherd Shōyō is clear about not using Emperor Bibun as a pretext to justify the battle that the General is provoking. In so doing, Tsubouchi's *gibun* illuminates the disconnectedness of Mori's point of departure from his.

That Tsubouchi mobilizes the figure of "emperor" in his allegorical narrative has layers of implications. This is the time when the emperor system was becoming reinstalled and beginning to function as Meiji Japan's central governance structure.²³⁵ The Meiji

235. For further information, see Carol Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths: Ideology in the Late Meiji Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

Emperor, the historical figure, was accordingly being absolutized as the sole center of Japan and deified as the locus that serves as the historical and spiritual foundation of Japanese people. Accordingly, the naming of Emperor Bibun (Emperor Aesthetic Writing) in Tsubouchi's *gibun* essays produced at this time has double evocation: The absoluteness of the emperor in the political institution, and the singularity of beauty that is to be manifested in aesthetic literature. As much as this naming reflects Tsubouchi's concern about confining literature solely as an aesthetic object, it also echoes Mori's monotheistic prioritization of beauty that exceeds other value standards.

However, this absolute center, Emperor Bibun, begins to be pushed aside as the battle between Shepherd Shōyō and General Ōgai in the allegorical world of *gibun* continues. Moreover, he eventually vanishes from the *gibun* narrative completely, as if he never had much significance from the start. Emperor Bibun is mentioned briefly in "Waseda bungaku-gayatsu jibun hyōron-mura no engi," "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru," and "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi," as the reason for which General Ōgai wages the war against the Village. In "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu," how General Ōgai serves as a loyal retainer to Emperor Bibun is acknowledged very shortly. Nevertheless, there is no other reference to Emperor Bibun at all after that.²³⁶ Emperor Bibun is introduced only nominally and it is left ambiguous how he is actually related to the battle. In "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi," Tsubouchi has Nyūdō Jōken make a bold statement as below:

Uyū Sensei is a false name to hide himself from the world. His true identity is von Hartmann with green eyes and blond hair. Once this is unmasked, it is obvious that the real stronghold of the enemy General is nothing but Hartmann's enormous philosophy. If, by any chance, the total war was about to break out, hundreds of battleships would cross the Indian Ocean, traversing the Mediterranean Sea, and

236. Tsubouchi, "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu," 1.

rush to the real stronghold in Germany in order to fight out the final battle.²³⁷

Once Hartmann is detected behind General Ōgai, Nyūdō is more than willing to confront Hartmann instead of his immediate enemy. That is, Tsubouchi is insinuating that he is ready to tackle Hartmann's aesthetic theory himself in order to draw an ultimate conclusion about whether Hartmann convinces and disproves him or not. As Tsubouchi makes a gesture that he does not need to confront with Mori as a rivalry discussant anymore, the latter is no longer even recognized as the former's enemy at this point.

What is noteworthy is how this shifting rivalry relationship between the Village and General Ōgai/Hartmann affects, or rather hardly affects Emperor Bibun. Despite his supposedly majestic position, Emperor Bibun has no say in an advance or retreat of the battle. Nyūdō's assertion about crossing the "national" border and encountering Hartmann overseas without an imperial ordinance clearly exceeds authority given to a lay priest in a small village. Nevertheless, Emperor Bibun is still speechless and motionless.

Furthermore, the decisive call for a cease-fire is not uttered from Emperor Bibun, but from Monju Bosatsu, a bodhisattva of wisdom, who Shepherd Shōyō meets in his dream. Monju Bosatsu urges Shepherd Shōyō:

Bad, bad, small sheep Shōyō, this discussion battle of yours is not pleasant for readers. For you yourself, it is a pastime. Especially for those who are reading *Waseda bungaku*, it is terrible inconvenience, for the pages for lectures are reduced and miscellaneous reports are paused. Enough already. Stop the verbal war of sour grapes. . . . Do without theory that is above your means and focus on description as you used to do. . . . This is just a nuisance.²³⁸

237. Tsubouchi, "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi," 26.

238. Tsubouchi, "Monju Bosatsu no gōiken," 27–28.

Exercising no agency in the matter and disappearing from the story, Emperor Bibun in this essay is doubly relativized. The battle is interrupted by the saint from a different religion from Shintoism, i.e., the nationalized religion that the Meiji government was instating along with the deification process of the Meiji Emperor.²³⁹ Moreover, the intervention is not even made in the world in which Emperor Bibun resides but in the realm of dreams. Yet, the entire dream about Monju Bosatsu does not function as the replaced absolute, as it is also relativized as a "dream of worldly desires," likened to a dream "in the spring night" that is "futile."²⁴⁰ As such, there is no absolute authority, no center stabilized in this *gibun* world.

At this point, Emperor Bibun is simply vanishing from the scene without even leaving a trace of his own dissipation. Nobody knows where he is. Nobody questions what happens to him. Emperor Bibun is just not there, and his vanishing is taken for granted in the narrative. This vanishment is different from negation; while negation presupposes affirmation of what is to be negated, there is even no negation in Tsubouchi's *gibun* texts. In other words, the existence of what is to be negated itself is disappearing together with the act of negation. What is left is a list of words, tools, and styles from different ages and places, metonymically arranged for the sole purpose of writing.²⁴¹ There is no apparent

239. Whether or not Shintoism, which was being nationally (re)instated in late nineteenth-century Japan, could be called religion deserves our attention. Isomae Jun'ichi argues that "ideologies that concerned with the emperor system were considered to be a belonging of the realm of ethics, and, shrines and Shintoism turned into non-religion but into ethics," so that "Shintoism could avoid falling into competitions against other religions such as Christianity and Buddhism." Isomae, "Kindai ni okeru 'shūkyō' gainen no keisei katei" ("The Formation Process of the Concept of 'Religion' in Modern Japan"), in *Kindaichi no seiritsu (The Establishment of Modern Knowledge)*, edited by Komori Yōichi et al (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 182–184.

240. Tsubouchi, "Monju Bosatsu no gōiken," 28. "Dream in the spring night" (*haru no yo no yume*) could be an allusion to the famous opening passage of *The Tales of the Heike*, another war-tale that has been composed and passed down in an oral form from the medieval period. The climax of *The Tales of the Heike* is the end of the Heike clan along with the drowning of the Heike-bred Emperor Antoku. The evocation of *The Tales* and its dealing with the death of Emperor Antoku in Tsubouchi's *gibun* in a sense anticipates the dislocation of Emperor Bibun.

241. On a side note, Tsubouchi's writing in general has a metonymic tendency. One such example appears in his categorization of contemporary novel writers into three groups—*koyūha* (endemism-oriented group), *secchūha* (eclecticism-oriented group), and *ningenha* (humans-oriented group). Tsubouchi denies that there is

hierarchy imposed upon them; they are just listed contiguously one after another. The absolute is relativized, invalidated, and made dysfunctional as such.

Tsubouchi's *gibun* is disclosing that there is no absolute, and it does so by making Emperor Bibun vanish from the world. This world constructed in the *gibun* style is certainly an allegorical one that parallels the debate between Tsubouchi and Mori. However, provided that *gibun* had a history as a conduit for a political satire since the Edo period,²⁴² and that it was one of the cultural practices that was made associated with Japan's pre-modernness at this time, such a figurative scenario presented in *gibun* could be trespassing on the state of affairs of Meiji Japan. If there was only a fine line between the world in *gibun* and that in reality, the figure of the emperor who is vanishing, the absolute that reveals its relativity and

hierarchy among these three, based on the reasoning that these categories are characteristically different. Tsubouchi, "Shinsaku jūniban no uchi kihatsu yonban gōhyō."

Mori makes a sharp contrast to Tsubouchi's metonymic, ahierarchical categorization. Borrowing Hartmann's schema, Mori argues that *koyū-ha* must correspond to what Hartmann calls *ruisō* (generic, preconfigured idea), *secchū-ha* to *kosō* (individual idea), and *ningen-ha* to *shōtenchisō* (microcosmic idea), then places these three categories in a hierarchical order that postulates linear progression of the idea, and finally naturalizes the inevitability of that progression. Mori, "Shōyōshi no shinsaku jūnibanchū kihatsu shiban gōhyō," 6.

While Tsubouchi's essay is marked with spatiality in that it evokes historical events, people, and writings only for the purpose of organizing a metonymic list, Mori's reaction places historical occurrences in a stratified, hierarchized order. As Kōjin Karatani maintains, Tsubouchi's juxtaposition of these three categories resists the simple endorsement of "the West" as one and sole standard in approaching writing practices conducted in contemporary Japan. Karatani writes:

Of course, Shōyō's thinking was not altogether free from a certain kind of linear historicism. But where Shōyō excelled was in daring not to accept a Western view of "literary history," making him similar to Sōseki, who conceived of his own theory of literature while in London.

See Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, 149.

242. *Gibun* or *gesaku* existed as a popular genre of writing often dedicated to satire and caricature against the authority or the mainstream during the late Edo period. The career of *gesaku* writer Kanagaki Robun who was active from the late Edo to the early Meiji period offers a good example of how *gesaku* style writing could be subversive and potentially threaten the authority. He was censured and even arrested for his satirical publications under the Meiji regime. See Robun, "Shuppan no fujiyū" ("Inconvenience of Publication"), *Kanayomi shinbun*, October 22, 1877, 3.

arbitrariness could be a radical critique against Japan that was turning itself into an imperial nation at that time.

Receiving a series of *gibun* essays that practically called the debate to an end, Mori unaffectedly responded with rigid logicality again by emphasizing the inappropriateness of the *gibun* style for writing criticism.²⁴³ However, after Tsubouchi's *gibun*, Mori's recourse to logic is nothing other than a comic. The more he resists Tsubouchi and *gibun*, the more he ends up caricaturing himself. Mori's persistent recourse to logical writing in contrast to the fluidity of Tsubouchi's *gibun* ludicrously demonstrates the limits of the former's performance in the debating process, only to render his writing suffocative. The negation of the ideal debate was thus brought to an end, without any visible marking of the closure, just like any other debates.

Tsubouchi's theory of the submerged ideal and Mori's counterarguments against it derived from a common ground, in that they both posited the absolute through negativity in their discussions about literature and sought universality through conceiving literature in Japan. In that sense, the negation of the ideal debate certainly went hand in hand with Meiji Japan's longing to civilize itself. This debate, however, proceeded in a way that the absolute ceased to exercise its centripetal force, and resultantly that their interactions in criticism eluded their own attempts to pursue universality. Precisely when it was faltering, the criticism they produced engendered an irreducible moment, dislocated from the historical context within which it came into being. This moment is literally critical, intervening in the

243. Mori, "Waseda bungaku no kō-botsurisō," 25–26. About a year later from "Waseda bungaku no kō-botsurisō," Mori restates how he disagrees with Tsubouchi by arguing that *Waseda bungaku's* prioritization of "description" contributes to the decline of discussions about aesthetics. "Criticism is philosophical and theoretical," and therefore, "description" cannot be considered "true criticism," according to Mori. Mori, "Mumeishi ni atauru sho" ("Letter to Mr. Anonymous"), *Shigarami zōshi* 44 (May 25, 1893): 1–2.

putative integrity of history.

The following chapter addresses the controversy between Yamaji Aizan and Kitamura Tōkoku, the so-called interrelations with life debate (*jinsei sōshō ronsō*), that was set off in the early 1890s. Their discussions chiefly revolved around one question: Whether or not literature ought to have purposiveness other than being purely poetic and literary. Against Aizan's claim on literature's inevitable purposiveness, Tōkoku repeated its absolute autonomy. The chapter analyzes how Tōkoku in the debating process ended up becoming extremely monologic and solipsistic, devoid of engagement with what was surrounding him. As my concluding remark, I offer my reading of what Tōkoku's soliloquy bequeathed to studies of modern Japanese literature.

CHAPTER SIX

Monologic Criticism: The Case of the Interrelations with Life Debate

"Pure literature" (*jun bungaku*) is the term that came into use since the early 1890s to refer to autonomous, exclusively aesthetic literature. Whether a certain piece of writing falls in the category of pure literature or not has been dictating the ways in which it is perceived, marketed, and consumed.²⁴⁴ Literature, predicated to be pure: Needless to say, the claim of purity is premised upon what it is not, i.e., impurity. In other words, purity is only viable when it is prefaced by other elements that potentially contaminates its integrity. To say that literature needs to be pure, therefore, entails to first locate something impure, something other than literature, and then exclude it.

In the case of late nineteenth-century Japan, the purification of literature was enabled precisely because other elements became available as possible counterpoints against which literature could distance itself. Multiple visions of literature, expressed in such terms as "nature," "science," among others, became foregrounded in intellectual discussions. It is those visions that served as reference points in contrast to which the purely aesthetic came to be delineated as the primary constituent of a linguistic art. In the sense that the claim of purity is only possible by being preceded by the registering of contaminants, only through the identification of impurity, such a conception of literature in the purest form would not have been possible at the point of, for instance, Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō's *Shōsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*) written in the middle of the 1880s.

So far this dissertation has examined several debates about literature that took place

244. The clear division between the Akutagawa prize for pure literature and the Naoki prize for so-called popular literature (*taishū-bungaku*) is one typical example. Interestingly, these two prizes were simultaneously set forth in 1935, which signals a dependent relationship between purity and whatever it is not.

between the late 1880s and the early 1890s, positioning those debates as a crucial site of criticism that ultimately purified the notion of literature and turned it into an aesthetic object categorized as fine arts. If criticism proposed what literature could become and at the same time deprived literature of possibilities of developing into something other than a fine art, the emergence of the rhetoric of pure literature was in a sense an inevitable consequence.

The investigation into the emergence of pure literature requires closely evaluation of the division that is laid between pure literature and what it is not. In this concluding chapter, I focus on the interrelations with life debate (*jinkei sōshō ronsō*) that was fought between Kitamura Tōkoku and Yamaji Aizan in the early 1890s, considering this controversy as one decisive index of the purification process of literature's boundaries. While literature was becoming into a purely aesthetic, autonomous object and rejecting potential contamination by what was designated incompatible with the aesthetic, Tōkoku's criticism simultaneously began to enact purity in and of itself in the mode of monologic expression. Contemplating the historical and ideological implications of his linguistic solipsism, I bring closure to this dissertation.

Let us first look into how, and in what context literature and its purity became rhetorically connected in the early 1890s. In January 1893, Yamaji Aizan, journalist affiliated with the Min'yūsha School, contributed "Rai Noboru o ronzu" ("Discussing Rai Noboru [Rai San'yō]) to *Kokumin no tomo* and stipulated the act of writing as follows:

Writing is a project. Writers wield their pen, just like heroes swing their swords. Both of them do what they do, not in order to shoot the air, but to aim at what needs to be achieved. Ten thousand bullets and thousand swords—if they do not benefit the world, they just vanish into the void. Flamboyant phrases and graceful sentences—if they are left in hundreds of volumes in the world, they too come to

nothing unless they interrelate with life. Writing should be respected precisely because it is a project. I discuss Rai Noboru, which means I discuss his project.²⁴⁵

By specifically mentioning "flamboyant phrases and graceful sentences," Aizan was in fact taking issue with the Ken'yūsha School's writings, which often featured sexually-charged scandalous narratives. What he prioritized as an alternative, more significant constituent of literature is historical writings. After this brief introduction, Aizan spends the rest of the pages to situate Edo writer Rai San'yō (Noboru) as a prestigious historian whose representative work *Nihon gaishi* (*Unofficial History of Japan*, 1827) played an influential role in the formation of revolutionary thoughts in Japan towards the end of the Edo period.²⁴⁶

A little over a month later, Kitamura Tōkoku published "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya" ("What Does Interrelating with Life Even Mean?") in literature-centered journal *Bungakukai* (*The World of Literature*), condemning Aizan for assailing the realm of "pure literature" with a "hammer of historical writings."²⁴⁷ Similarly to Aizan, Tōkoku at

245. Yamaji Aizan, "Rai Noboru o ronzu," *Kokumin no tomo* 178 (January 13, 1893): 39.

246. Aizan's account illuminates the ways in which many young Meiji intellectuals conceived history and their own position in it, especially when the the Freedom and People's Rights Movement was dissolved around the middle of the 1880s. Maeda Ai and Christopher Hill's studies are suggestive of how the concept of history experienced a drastic shift in the first two decades of Meiji and how young intellectuals like Aizan began to conceptualize themselves as a historical being who relays the past to the future in order to construct a new Japan. See Maeda, *Kindai Nihon no bungaku kūkan: rekishi, kotoba, jōkyō* (Tokyo: Shin-yōsha, 1983), and Hill, "How to Write a Second Restoration: the Political Novel and Meiji Historiography," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 33, no.2 (Summer 2007).

247. Kitamura Tōkoku, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya," *Bungakukai* (*The World of Literature*) 2 (February 28, 1893): 1–8.

Tōkoku begins the essay by saying: "Exquisite and delicate literature invited aversion from all over the public and helped the counter-force to arise to an incredible extent." While "exquisite and delicate literature" points to the Ken'yūsha School's writings, "the counter-force" refers to Aizan and by extension the Min'yūsha School who consider the popularity of "historical writings" as a natural outcome of historical progression of literature in Japan. That is to say, while Tōkoku is acknowledging that Aizan is criticizing the Ken'yūsha, he still takes issue with how Aizan prioritizes "historical writings" as purposive projects over what Tōkoku calls pure literature. By negating Aizan's "historical writings" and the Ken'yūsha's novels about human emotions

that time was problematizing the sexual, scandalous tendency underlying in the works of the Ken'yūsha School.²⁴⁸ In that sense, Tōkoku was in agreement with Aizan to a certain degree. Yet, Tōkoku's problematization in "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya" was particularly directed to the ways in which Aizan identified literature with projects that immediately need to serve a purpose in human life.²⁴⁹

. . . , literature does not take projects as its purpose. Literature does not need to interrelate with life, nor does it necessarily turn to Kyōzan-esque fact-based description. Literature does not require becoming like San'yō-esque imperialism when it attacks its enemy. Finally, literature does not have to shoot one enemy, hundreds of enemies who are all visible.²⁵⁰

Saying so, Tōkoku emphasizes that writing does not need to accomplish a purpose in a visible, immediately recognizable form, and that "literature's dignity" should not be maimed by "worldly matters called projects."²⁵¹ Thus contradicted, how literature should be positioned vis-à-vis purposiveness in life became foregrounded as a primary point of contention between these two intellectuals.²⁵² Throughout their exchanges in writing from

altogether, Tōkoku posits another literature that emerges through the mediation of the world of the idea.

By the term literature, Tōkoku almost exclusively refers to poetry that goes beyond logic. Tōkoku's conception of literature is certainly not unrelated to his reading experiences of Emerson. He even wrote a biography about him. Tōkoku, *Emaruson (Emerson)*, vol. 6 of *Jūni bungō (The Twelve Men of Letters)*, (Tokyo: Min'yūsha, 1894).

248. See Tōkoku, "Takai ni taisuru kan'nen" ("The Concept about the Other World"), *Kokumin no tomo* 169 and 170 (October 13 and 23, 1892): 25–27 and 27–31, respectively.

249. Tōkoku leaves the rest of Aizan's essay about Rai San'yō almost entirely untouched. However, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya" is received as Tōkoku's disagreement, not with Aizan, but with Rai San'yō, by some contemporary critics. To this, Tōkoku later explains how he is not taking issue with Aizan's historicization of Rai San'yō.

250. Tōkoku, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya," 3.

251. *Ibid.*, 2–3.

252. It is not that Aizan and Tōkoku are entirely in conflict with each other. They debate on paper, and yet in actuality they are close friends and discuss what they are debating on paper on a personal level. It is necessary to take into consideration their social network and the performative aspect of public debates.

then on, Tōkoku continuously repeated how pure literature germinates from the idea, and how such a realm is absolutely immovable and untouchable.²⁵³

In his rebuttal against Tōkoku, Aizan equated artistic, aesthetic literature to mere "figures of speech,"²⁵⁴ and explained that what he meant by projects did not simply point to visible, tangible accomplishments in "the materialistic world" but also included "projects in the spiritual world."²⁵⁵ While Tōkoku persistently took issue with the thinking of literature in terms of its purposive, practical value,²⁵⁶ Aizan condemned how Tōkoku and his fellow Christians have a strong tendency to be "pantheistic and mentalistic" and are always in denial of directly engaging with human affairs.²⁵⁷ Backing Aizan, Tokutomi Sōhō, Aizan's superior at the Min'yūsha School, also obliquely reproached Tōkoku that he was a "highbrow hermit," and that his writing practices brought harm to society for having no intention to interact with things around them.²⁵⁸

To these tagged-attacks from two competitive journalists from the Min'yūsha School, Tōkoku humbly responded by explicating what initially drove him into initiating the controversy:

253. Tōkoku, "Jinsei no igi" ("Meaning of Life"), *Bungakukai* 5 (May 31, 1893): 3–6, and "Naibu seimei ron" ("Theory on Inner Life"), *Bungakukai* 5 (May 31, 1893): 9–15.

254. Aizan, "Meiji bungaku shi, dai ni" ("History of Meiji Literature, Second Entry"), *Kokumin shinbun*, intermittently serialized from March 1 through June 11, 1893.

255. Aizan, "Meiji bungaku shi, dai ni," *Kokumin shinbun*, March 5, 1893, Appendix 1.

256. Tōkoku, "Nihon bungakushi kotsu" ("Bones of Japan's History of Literature"), *Hyōron* 1 (April 8, 1893): 11. That both Tōkoku and Aizan separately launched a project to historicize Meiji literature suggests how they individually tried to territorialize the realm of literature.

257. Aizan, "Yuishinteki, hanshinteki keikō ni tsuite" ("Regarding the Mentalistic, Pantheistic Tendency"), *Kokumin shinbun*, April 19, 1893, 1.

258. Sōhō, "Shakai ni okeru shisō no sanchōryū" ("Three Currents of Thought in Society"), *Kokumin no tomo* 188 (April 23, 1893): 6. In this essay, Sōhō categorizes contemporary writers into three groups: *dakō-ha* (utilitarian opportunism), *kōgai-ha* (patriotic deplore-ism), and *kōtō-ha* (highbrow hermit-ism), blaming all three as harmful.

The focal point of the discussions between Aizan and me (independently of the *Bungakukai* group) lies in whether or not literature in the sense of fact-based transcription needs to interrelate with life, or whether or not literature allows the thing called the ideal to be applied to life. I am not a worshipper of the ideal at all. Just because Aizan tends to force literature towards facts all too strongly, I just tried to hit him back once on a whim. On second thought, it is a trivial fight, isn't it?²⁵⁹

This statement, uttered with a very personal, regretful tone, signals Tōkoku's coming to terms with his opponents. The discussion about literature's purposiveness itself did not develop any further after this. Without seeing a clear marker of closure, the debate was soon brought to an end.²⁶⁰

Making a compromising gesture on the one hand, however, Tōkoku also stipulated literature in his own terms and underlined differences between his literature, which is literature in the purest form, and Aizan's literature, which Tōkoku reductively designated as "fact-based." In other words, whereas the tone of the attack against the Min'yūsha affiliates gradually alleviated, Tōkoku was still consistent in his rhetorical manipulation of what the term literature could point to. That is to say, Tōkoku singled out purposiveness in what the Min'yūsha affiliates envisioned as literature and identified it as a detrimental element that would contaminate the purity of literature.

Of course, there is no a priori necessity that literature is exempt from purposiveness. Aizan once asked Tōkoku to further elaborate what makes purity pure, insinuating that there

259. Tōkoku, "Jinsei no igi," 5.

260. For more detailed information on the debate, see Kitagawa Tōru, *Kitamura Tōkoku shiron II: naibu seimei no toride* (Tokyo: Tōjusha, 1976), Noguchi Takehiko, "Kindai Nihon bungaku to 'hihyō' no hakken" ("Modern Japanese Literature and the Discovery of 'Criticism'"), *Hihyō kūkan* 1 (1991), and Satō Zen'ya, *Kitamura Tōkoku to jinsei sōshō ronsō* (Tokyo: Kindai Bungeisha, 1998).

is no such a thing called pure literature.²⁶¹ Although Aizan himself did not seem to realize this, Aizan's question was urgent, for he was destabilizing the concept of purity itself, based upon which Tōkoku's pure literature was established. However, this question was left undeveloped as neither Aizan nor Tōkoku delved deeper into it. Without being troubled thoroughly, what Tōkoku set in motion as his literature was sustained.

I wish to highlight that Tōkoku was consistent in eliminating literature's purposiveness from his vision of literature, not only by opposing the Min'yūsha affiliates, but also by severing himself from Iwamoto Yoshiharu's *Jogaku zasshi* School, the very literacy group from which he established his writing career. This is important, because looking at how Tōkoku distanced pure literature from purposiveness equally from the Min'yūsha School and the *Jogaku zasshi* School—two schools of thought that were on antagonistic terms in the late nineteenth century²⁶²—throughout his writings enables us to contemplate a larger historical backdrop against which the purity of literature came to be posited.

To reflect this point, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that the interrelations with life debate coincided with the establishment process of new literature journal *Bungakukai*, for which Tōkoku served as a major contributor.²⁶³ *Bungakukai* was originally

261. See Aizan, "Jun bungaku," *Kokumin shinbun*, May 3, 1893, 5.

262. The antagonistic relationship between the Min'yūsha School and the *Jogaku zasshi* School had manifested in several ways. As seen in the case of the "Literature and Nature" debate, the conflict between these two schools had layers of social and political implications. Is the Min'yūsha School, which claims itself as a *Nation's Friend*, really a nation's friend? Such skepticism was embedded in the *Jogaku zasshi* affiliates' long-term discord with the Min'yūsha School, when what the Min'yūsha School promoted as "democracy" (*heimin shugi*) tended to normalize highly gendered and class-based views of society. Tōkoku's charge against Aizan still echoes a broader level of disagreement between the *Jogaku zasshi* School and the Min'yūsha School.

263. *Jogaku zasshi* was launched in 1885 and became split into two in 1892: *kō* (*shiro omote*, or "white cover") that features literature-related writings and *otsu* (*aka omote*, or "red cover") that topicalizes women's issue. Soon, the volume of *kō* was retitled as *Hyōron* (*Critical Discussions*) in 1893, and yet *Jogaku zasshi* reappropriated *Hyōron* in 1894. A new journal *Bungakukai* was launched in 1893 while the *Jogaku zasshi* School was undergoing the transition. According to Okada Akiko, *Bungakukai* took over another journal

launched by the *Jogaku zasshi* affiliates as an independent literature section of the latter. Nevertheless, the central members of *Bungakukai* made it clear that they did not share the same view of literature with their matrix. In the early stage of the journal's establishment, *Bungakukai*'s chief editor (supposedly Hoshino Tenchi) makes a distinctive address as follows:

This journal was started because we had a different belief about literature [from the *Jogaku zasshi* School], and therefore, all responsibility should be directed to us editors of the journal. Please kindly remember that from now on Iwamoto Yoshiharu should not be blamed for anything related to *Bungakukai*. . . . This journal is our humble, sincere attempt that is to be devoted to literature. From the start, this is not for religious missions, nor for didactic suasion. We cannot get our hands on social moral reform, either. Please do not regard literature only as a means to seek for virtue.²⁶⁴

In the appearance of simple explanation of the journal's mission, this editor singles out Iwamoto, associates Iwamoto's vision of literature with religion, didacticism, and moral suasion, and negates those associations with *Bungakukai*'s literature.²⁶⁵ Thus posited, *Bungakukai*'s vision of literature completely turns down literature being instrumentalized for other "non-literary" purposes.²⁶⁶

Jogakusei (*Female Students*) that had been run by the *Jogaku zasshi* School from 1890 to 1892. Okada, *Jogaku zasshi to ōka: Kirisutokyō chishikijin to jogakusei no media kūkan* (*The Women's Magazine and Westernization: The Media Space of Christian Intellectuals and Female Students*) (Tokyo: Shinwasha, 2013), 224.

264. Anonymous, "Hitokoto okyakusamagata e" ("A Word to Readers"), *Bungakukai* 5 (May 31, 1893): 8.

265. *Bungakukai*'s negation of "religion" here could be an oblique response to a label that *Kokumin no tomo* once gave to it. Several months prior to *Bungakukai*'s declaration of its independence from the *Jogaku zasshi* School, an anonymous writer contributed an essay about *Bungakukai* in *Kokumin no tomo*, calling the former's literature as "sorrowful," "passive," and "emotional" "Christian literature." Anonymous, "Bungakukai," *Kokumin no tomo* 181 (February 13, 1893): 32–34.

266. Kunori Junko examines how the interrelations with life debate intersected with other discourses about religion and education. Kunori, "'Jinsei sōshō ronsō' no mondai: gensetsu no seijisei" ("Issues in the 'Interrelations with Life Debate': Politicality of Discourses"), *Nihon bungaku nōto* (*Notes on Japanese Literature*) 28 (1993): 150–161.

As a core participant of *Bungakukai*, Tōkoku also shared this editor's view. Tōkoku's refusal to align with those who promote literature's instrumentality manifests most saliently in *Bungakukai*'s inaugural issue, when his essay and Iwamoto Yoshiharu's essay were published next to each other. Iwamoto contributed "Bunshō no michi" ("The Path of Writing"), in which he underlined the necessity to pursue writing's functionality in society:

Writing is a reflection of human minds. . . . , writing gives a form to a reflection of minds, and, it should not exist unless it resembles the true state, unless it is truthful and honest. Therefore, lofty writing derives from lofty morality. Respectable, outstanding writing is originated in respectable, outstanding feeling and thinking. . . . , without culturing the mind to the deepest, true writing that has no deception would never be possible. . . . Fine writing that does not have truth in it is the same [as fine words that do not have any effect]. . . . Those who create writing have to be those who create minds. Those who master phraseology must be those who master virtue.²⁶⁷

Iwamoto's essay with emphasis on "morality" and "virtue" assumes a highly ethical tone.²⁶⁸ More importantly, this passage reveals how Iwamoto is naturalizing a causal relationship between writing and its disciplinary effect. According to Iwamoto's logic, writing cannot be completed solely with what is inherent in it; it needs to serve as a vehicle for other ethical purposes.

By contrast, Tōkoku's essay "Fugaku no shishin o omou" ("Thinking about the Poetic Divinity of Mt. Fuji") that was placed immediately after Iwamoto's speaks of nothing at all regarding literature's extrinsic function. Instead, Tōkoku on and on describes the role of Mt. Fuji in the genealogy of poetic writing in Japan. He then writes:

267. Iwamoto, "Bunshō no michi," *Bungakukai* 1 (January 31, 1893): 1–2.

268. Iwamoto's emphasis on literature's functionality suggests his continuous effort to emphasize ethical literature in relation to women's education, discussed in Chapter Three.

Because the poetic divinity adored the dignity of Mt. Fuji, he stayed and took up his resided in there, without ever leaving again. From here, the path of refined taste opened up. In order to stroll together with the poetic divinity, from Hitomaro, Akahito to the apprentices of Saigyō and Bashō, they all wandered around Mt. Fuji and began to construct a formless, invisible monument in the air.²⁶⁹

Tōkoku narrates how the poetic divinity of Mt. Fuji enabled poets to refine their taste. What is crucial is that, it is not a strong assertion about literature's functionality, but the very lack of it that marks Tōkoku's vision of literature. Tōkoku simply describes the process through which poetry comes into being, without attempting to justify its *raison d'être*. Literature is autonomous, and there is no need to rationalize it nor explain its benefits. Hitomaro, Akahito, Saigyō, Bashō—these poets composed poetry simply because they "adored the dignity of Mt. Fuji," and, no other reasoning of what their poetry caters to, be it historical, societal, or ethical, is required. Literature posited here is self-explanatorily validated as is.

Clearly, Tōkoku's literature does not compare to Iwamoto's; while the latter repeats its functionality, it never occurs in the former's writing to elaborate what good literature could bring into being. There was no public confrontation between Tōkoku/the *Bungakukai* group and Iwamoto/the *Jogaku zasshi* School, in which sense their parting was much subtler than the case of the interrelations with life debate. Nonetheless, after "Bunshō no michi," the *Bungakukai* group no longer included Iwamoto's writings in their journal.

As mentioned, scrutinizing Tōkoku's opposition to Aizan/Sohō/the Min'yūsha School and to Iwamoto/the *Jogaku zasshi* School side by side with each other offers us an opportunity to look into how the claim of pure literature came to rise. These two cases help

269. Tōkoku, "Fugaku no shishin o omou," *Bungakukai* 1 (January 31, 1893): 5. It needs to be noted that Tōkoku in this writing repetitively mentions *kokka* (country, state) and *kuni* (country, nation) in relation to literature of the Yamato (= Japan, an ancient name for Japan) people. It is possible to observe an example of how (the effective mobilization of) literature can go hand in hand with (the rhetoric of) a nation state.

illuminate what is excluded from the category of pure literature: historically- and politically-driven functionality advocated by the Min'yūsha School, as well as religious, ethical, and moral instrumentality emphasized by the *Jogaku zasshi* School.

More importantly, the examination of these examples allows us to observe a certain mode of writing in which Tōkoku describes his conception of pure literature. I pay particular attention to the ways in which he presents what he promotes as pure literature while excluding possible contaminants. In my observation, his method of explaining the purity of literature in criticism turns extremely monologic and self-contained. His utterance that appears asocial, apolitical, and ahistorical is in fact negatively imprinted with the historical context of the time, when Japan was replicating the geopolitical hierarchy that it had with the West and expanding itself over Asia. I argue that this negativity inscribed in Tōkoku's language of criticism both testifies against history, and in so doing rejects being subsumed by the incessant flow of time.

Along with the example of "Fugaku no shishin o omou" quoted above to highlight his departure from the *Jogaku zasshi* School, I go back to the interrelations with life debate and analyze below how he explains pure literature against the Min'yūsha School. Tōkoku demonstrate what he means by pure literature in the early stage of the debate. Offering his reading of Edo poet Matsuo Bashō's famous haiku, Tōkoku lengthily narrativizes the process through which Bashō's poem comes into being as pure literature:

The bright moon,
(I) Wandered around the pond,
All night long

Remember: the individual who stands by the pond is a human composed of flesh; he is surrounded by all the binding cause by love, all the attachment, and all the sensual senses; he has fought against these formless enemies as much as his visible,

materialistic power allowed him to; he has been given many opportunities to get his hands on fame, benefits, and projects; he had no difficulty in participating in projects that interrelate with life. Nevertheless, he was not able to satisfy himself. He was never able to believe that he won a victory. He could not consider what is considered a victory from a shallow viewpoint as a victory. At this point, he stopped shooting the real, and started struggling to aim at the air. He did not get satisfied by standing by one side of the pond and staring at one part of the pond. Slowly, he started strolling. He took one cycle around the pond. Learning that one cycle was not enough to stare at the entire surface of the pond, he went around once more. The second cycle was enough to see the entire surface of the pond, and yet, he was unable to look through the bottom of the pond. So he went on the third time, and, the fourth time. In the end, he strolled around all night long. The pond is the real. When he stared at the pond, he did so, unlike a child hitting the water in the dark, by having something reflected on the pond, by throwing something in the pond, and by having something shed light on the pond. "Staring" is the word that can refer to the beginning of how he sees. "Annihilation": no other word can describe the afterward of how he sees. He forgot the real. He exited from humans. He was removed from flesh. Forgetting the real, removed from flesh, and exiting from humans, where has he gone? Stop asking the whereabouts of the cuckoo. He has flown away to the heavenly shores and reached the absolute, namely, "Idea."²⁷⁰

In this passage, Tōkoku is just narrating the steps through which the poet departs from the real, material world, annihilates his own physique and humanness, and eventually enters into the realm of the idea. In the same way that "Fugaku no shishin o omou" describes poetry's germination, Tōkoku's reading of Bashō attempts to recreate the path that the poet followed in order to create the poem. There is no explanation to rationalize why literature is important. Instead he just calmly describes how literature takes place.

Simple, descriptive narration of literature's formation: His long account on the transition process from the real to the idea is quite unusual as a theory of literature produced at that time, in that it generates strange substantialness in terms of how to reach the idea and create literature. Word by word, Tōkoku elaborates the path through which the poet comes nearer to the idea and clarifies how the production of literature in the purest form takes

270. Tōkoku, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan'no ii zoya," 6–7.

shape—the process of which none of his contemporaries elucidated. What he means by the idea still remains abstract, as he never verbalizes what constitutes it. Through the narrativization of Bashō's poetry, however, the idea that promises the germination of pure literature suddenly becomes much more legible, in spite of its abstractness.²⁷¹ Abstractness then becomes concretized in its own abstractness.

No less important is that Tōkoku's language of criticism begins to show a distinctive feature, while detailing the process of how pure literature comes into being. That is, his utterance comes to assume a highly monologic tone throughout its unfolding. I am not saying that Tōkoku's criticism is "monologue" in the word's deepest sense; it was still written and made public, which indicates that it anticipated to be experienced by others. Nonetheless, his rhetoric typically proceeds in such a way that it gradually turns inward, grows indifferent to and withdraws from what surrounds it, and thereby begins to operate as if it had its own grammar. In the end, in the same way that pure literature stand alone and rejects being acted upon by what may adulterate it, Tōkoku's criticism operates to preempt the possibility of interacting with anything other than itself.

In the debate against Aizan and the Min'yūsha School, Tōkoku repetitively underlines how the purity of literature is immovable and exists beyond any potential contaminants. As his argument unfolds, however, his writing leaves Aizan behind, as if it

271. Tōkoku also mobilizes many physically-marked expressions to explain the transition process: "raise my eyes," "grab the rejuvenating palace in my hands," "let the force of nature catch my legs," "let my head be established," and so forth. Whatever he is proposing with such words as "the vain vanity of vanities" and "the vast, enormous, and tremendous 'reality'" is indeed abstract. At the same time, however, his "physical" description blurs the border between what is figurative and what is literal. Articulating the physical process to reach the idea with rather corporeal phrases certainly helps to render legibility to the abstract path to proceed to the idea. Tōkoku, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan no ii zoya," 7–8.

was oblivious to what it is supposed to be engaging with. After demonstrating his reading of Bashō's poem, Tōkoku comes to a conclusion:

Lift your head, look, and then seek. By way of the lofty non-real and idea, look at the truly broad house, sincerely pleasant land, and the genuinely enormous project. Then seek for them. Throw your longing in the air. From the air, trace your vocation that can be accomplished for humans. Alas, you writer, why do you limit yourself, only in seeking for interrelations with life?²⁷²

With his usage of the imperative form and fragmented phrases, Tōkoku's final words rush in ceaseless torrents as his direct speech. As such, although he is imminently addressing "you writer," his address itself is self-contained, rather than inviting reactions and aiming at building a communicative relationship with its audience.²⁷³ It shows no interest in reaching out to others. His utterance is one-sided, thrown in the air, and expecting no interactions. An address without an addressee—Tōkoku's speech is necessarily redirected to itself and serves as a point of departure and simultaneously that of destination.

As a clear grammatical, stylistic marker, Tōkoku in his criticism mobilizes first-person pronoun "I" rather frequently.²⁷⁴ Plastered with multiple appearances of "I," his writings scarcely create the space for others to intervene in. He talks about himself, and, in so doing, extensively and exclusively addresses himself. In the end, his criticism becomes closed intrinsically and tries to defy the possibility of being reached from without. What is left in his criticism is nothing other than him and his soliloquy. His criticism at this point

272. Tōkoku, "Jinsei ni aiwataru towa nan no ii zoya," 8. Again, this passage is marked by many concrete expressions, while maintaining the abstractness of such terms as the non-real and idea.

273. His addressee is certainly not just his immediate opponents from the Min'yūsha School. In addition, given that *Bungakukai*, the medium in which Tōkoku's essay appeared, was still in its formative stage, its readership was yet to be stabilized.

274. A typical example is his "Naibu seimei ron."

comes to resemble what it claims—the purity of literature—in a sense. In the process of articulating the germination of pure literature, his language begins to enact solitude, the fundamental attribute of what he posits as pure literature that is sealed and sanctuarized in the world of the idea. Tōkoku's criticism that predicates pure literature no longer necessitates other works as an object that it criticizes, as it monologically, self-performatively lives the purity of literature itself. It is closed, in and of itself.²⁷⁵

Tōkoku's criticism embodies itself the purification process of literature, one that is stripped off of possibilities to relate to anything other than itself. Such intrinsic-ness by extension echoes *Bungakukai*'s indifference to matters that were designated as external to literature. With the emergence of Tōkoku and his participation in *Bungakukai*, literature became further individuated, aestheticized, and absolutized as that which stands by itself, for itself.

In such solipsism, however, criticism again diverged from the time and space within which it was encapsulated. To remember: Tōkoku began to promote pure literature in his writing in late nineteenth-century Japan, when Japan was transforming itself into a colonial empire. While undoubtedly caught in the historical context, the monologic mode of expression residing in Tōkoku's criticism also brought a halt to the passage of history. Though momentarily, whoever faces it becomes petrified in front of its solipsism. This brief halt that ensues from being confronted by Tōkoku's language cannot be simply reduced to and explained through what contextually prepared it.

275. The history of literature in Japan did not need to wait for the arrival of Kobayashi Hideo, oftentimes positioned as the "god of criticism," in the late 1920s until criticism began to be solidified as an aesthetic genre by itself. Criticism at the point of Tōkoku had already becoming into an aesthetic object.

It was soon after *Bungakukai* took off as a journal specialized in literature in 1893, and after Tōkoku's criticism started eliminating what could pollute the purity of literature in 1893, that the Sino-Japanese War broke out as a response to the Donghak Peasant Revolution in Korea, marking a pivotal point of Japan's military expansion in East Asia in the following decades. Many major journals, including *Kokumin no tomo* and *Jogaku zasshi*, were distributing war propaganda page after page through their publications. Under this climate, the closedness of Tōkoku's criticism published through *Bungakukai* in a sense evinces what it was withstanding precisely by going inward and further isolating itself.

Responding to the breakout of the War, Tokutomi Sohō from the Min'yūsha School enthusiastically supported Japan's imperial advancement through his journals and papers. From its 229th issue dated June 13, 1894, *Kokumin no tomo* began to feature the situation of the battle front extensively. Christian intellectual Uchimura Kanzō's notorious essay "Justification of the Korean [sic] War" written in English appeared in the 233rd issue of the journal (August 23, 1894), making an appeal of the "righteous" cause of the War to Anglophone countries. Iwamoto Yoshiharu, though not as evidently as Sohō, also expressed favorable opinions about the War in *Jogaku zasshi* starting from its 383rd issue dated June 9, 1894. *Jogaku zasshi*'s expansion at this time also reflects how the *Jogaku zasshi* School as a whole was rather willingly participating in the war effort.²⁷⁶

Contrary to the turn that *Kokumin no tomo* and *Jogaku zasshi* took, *Bungakukai* remained entirely indifferent to the Sino-Japanese War and spared no page to cover war-related writings. At the end of the year of 1894, *Bungakukai* ran an essay that specifically denied the interrelation between the War and literature as follows:

276. *Jogaku zasshi* merged with *Hyōron* in this year, as part of the *Jogaku zasshi* School's war effort. Okada, *Jogaku zasshi to ōka*, 60–61.

Such glorious concepts as justice, humanistic love, nation-state, and freedom are indeed essential to literature. The pleasantness of national arousing that we experience today necessarily affects literature. . . . However, those wind and waves cannot be recognized by inner life, . . . , and therefore, no matter how pleasant the national arousing is, no matter how glorious the nation-state concepts are, they can never hold a poetic, eternal life.²⁷⁷

I must hasten to add that *Bungakukai*'s indifference to the Sino-Japanese War, its withdrawal from the War coverage of course did not indicate by any means that they were consciously disavowing Japan's imperial expansion and other media's patriotic endorsement of it. It is not ambiguous that Tōkoku's writings such as "Fugaku no shishin o omou" fed and catered to the notion of "Japan" and its nationalistic reification.²⁷⁸ What I intend to emphasize here is how the space that Tōkoku and *Bungakukai* were creating—both physical and conceptual—refused to let literature coincide with anything other than literature, no matter how arbitrary and historical this "other than" could have been.

It is undeniable that Tōkoku's criticism came into being at a particular historical moment; its exceptional inwardness, its turning away from what encompassed it is the very

277. Fūtan (unidentified), "Nijūshichinen o okuru" ("Sending Off the 27th Year of Meiji"), *Bungakukai* 24 (December 30, 1894): 35.

278. Many scholars have approached Tōkoku by scrutinizing his involvement with the Freedom and Popular Rights Movement and suggested that Tōkoku changed course from politics to literature. See Irokawa Daikichi, "Tōkoku to seiji: Tōkoku no shin-shiryō shōkai ni atatte" ("Tōkoku and Politics"), *Bungaku* 4, no.2 (Spring, 1993), Oketani Hideaki, *Kindai no naraku* (Tokyo: Kokubunsha, 1974), and Harry Harootunian, "Between Politics and Culture: Authority and the Ambiguities of Intellectual Choice in Imperial Japan," in *Japan in Crisis: Essays on Taishō Democracy*, eds. Bernard Silberman and H.D. Harootunian (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974).

Contrary to the scholarly determinism about Tōkoku's "conversion" from politics to literature, I argue that it is not that Tōkoku changed course from politics to literature. The elimination of politics was itself a highly political gesture. Literature *was* politics as is, and vice versa. The relationship between literature and politics became highlighted in the so-called politics and literature debate (*seiji to bungaku ronsō*) that took place in the immediate post World War II period. The title of the debate itself ("literature *and* politics") demonstrates how the division between the two on the linguistic level became radically important for contemporary intellectuals at that time.

proof of its own historicity. And yet, his criticism simultaneously engenders an ambivalent split; while his monologic utterance was a historically-determined product, that historical condition is suspended and brought to a halt by the very monologism. In other words, it is both historical and antihistorical at the same time.

On the one hand, Tōkoku's criticism was a reaction, if not a negative form of aversion to what was contemporaneously taking place especially in the political arena. Simultaneously, his criticism entails the untouched-ness, the untouchable-ness of solipsism as it is suffused with itself in its own world. After all, his criticism was produced, on the premise that it would relate to others. Nonetheless, it is still sealed, forbids anything to affect it. With its presence, it only asks whoever approaches it to stay away and stand still. It is in these moments, where Tōkoku's language no longer tolerates relations with anything but itself, that his criticism becomes more than just a medium through which the purity of literature is claimed. Tōkoku's criticism moves to petrify itself as well as whatever, whoever comes to near it, and thereby calling a halt to completely reducing itself to history.

CODA

About a year before the confrontation with Aizan, Tōkoku published "Enseishika to josei" ("Pessimistic Poet and Woman"), highlighting the importance of romance for the poet who is doomed to be defeated in the material world, that of the real.

What could help the defeated general of the world of the idea? What could satisfy him after all? Romance, I say. . . . It is nothing but romance that serves as a stronghold in which the defeated general of the world of the idea barricades himself after the battle between the world of the idea and that of the real.²⁷⁹

However, the poet's recourse to romance, his seeking refuge in the world of the idea engenders a dilemma.

Once a man and a woman meet and become one, . . . , society that has been distant from him up to then suddenly becomes imminent, and, rituals and duties that have never been in his mind rapidly approach nearer and nearer. . . . , in other words, he is removed from the world of the idea and made a prisoner of the world of the real, and, he loses the unrestrained state of the world of the idea and becomes fettered in the world of the real. To say this in a tasteful expression: marriage thoroughly vulgarizes the poet.²⁸⁰

The poet who rejects, or rather, is rejected by the world of the real pessimistically takes refuge in the world of the idea, mediated by romance. Despite that, romance ends up redirecting the inhabitant of the world of the idea towards the world of the real by way of the institution of marriage. Resultantly, the poet becomes caught in a dilemma, because as soon as he is settled in the world of the idea he has to begin removing himself from it. As

279. Kitamura Tōkoku, "Enseishika to josei (jō)," *Jogaku zasshi* 303 (February 6, 1892): 5.

280. Tōkoku, "Enseishika to josei (ge)," *Jogaku zasshi* 305 (February 20, 1892): 6.

such, the idea that Tōkoku is positing is never retainable; the moment it is reached, soon it needs to be let go, only to be taken over by the real once again.

This dilemma, though, eventually drives the poet into having to exit the world of the real.

Through romance, he acquires his ideal marrying mate. Through marriage, he becomes ruptured from the world of the idea to be restrained in that of the real. Through death, he parts from the world of the real and that of the material.²⁸¹

Death is the only way out. In the end, pessimistic poets are driven to leave the double bind at the cost of their own lives. "Enseishika to josei" commiserates with women who have to sacrifice themselves for those poets. Nonetheless, Tōkoku's theory still places the world of the idea beyond such empathy, by introducing death as the ultimate solution and ensuring the fundamental unaffectedness of where literature germinates.

Two years after "Enseishika to josei," Tōkoku exited from this world by terminating his life, as if he had enacted the poet's dilemma that he presented in the essay.²⁸² *As if he had lived what he had written*: His suicide has been considered in many scholarship as his desperate attempt to retain the purity of literature at the cost of his life, as his execution of the promise of pure literature that would never be sustained in the world of the real.²⁸³

281. Tōkoku, "Enseishika to josei (ge)," 7.

282. Tōkoku exits from the physical world in May 1894, literally a few month prior to the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

283. Tōkoku's death is further beautified by Shimazaki Tōson's works, such as *Haru* (Spring, 1908) and *Sakura no mi no jukusuru toki* (When the Cherries Ripen, 1919). I list below some of the major scholarship that ennobled Tōkoku.

Nakano Shigeharu identifies Aizan as a "dirty positivist" in favor of Tōkoku. Nakano, "Akutagawashi no koto nado," in vol. 9 of *Nakano Shigeharu zenshū*, ed. Matsushita Yutaka (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobō, 1977), 104. Similarly, Odagiri Hideo calls Aizan as a "vulgar utilitarian." Odagiri, "Sannin no seinen sakka—Kitamura Tōkoku, Ishikawa Takuboku, Kobayashi Takiji," in *Kitamura Tōkoku ron* (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1970), 186. Following this line of schematized positioning of Tōkoku vis-à-vis Aizan, Janet Walker presents

Tōkoku has been long deified as a defender of the idea, the ultimate stronghold of pure literature in the scholarship on Meiji literature. The remarkable difference in the number between Tōkoku scholarship and that of Aizan is one obvious indication.²⁸⁴ Regardless of whether or not Tōkoku intended so himself, the romanticized reading of his death as his fatal attempt helped absolutize the notion of pure literature. By continuously enclosing pure literature in some sacred, untouchable realm, post-Meiji scholarship almost always treated pure literature as if it had already existed as a substantial category at the point of, or even prior to the interrelations with life debate. Such treatment only reinforced the belief in the purity of literature, despite that pure literature has been inscribed and reinscribed exactly through that sort of scholarly discourses.²⁸⁵ It goes without saying that the premise of the purity turned into the value itself throughout the scholarly interpretation processes thereof, contributing to the evolvement of literature as an indispensable part of Japan's culture production and industry.

Aizan as a "leading critic of the materialist school" who was confronted by Tōkoku, a defender of "idealistic poetry." See Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period and the Ideal of Individualism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 75–76.

Some scholarship deployed a so-called "influence" narrative—influence of such writers as Shakespeare, Goethe, Carlyle, Arnold, Emerson on Tōkoku. However, the limitation of that approach is obvious, in that it often places the "influencer" as a locus of meaning, while neglecting what enabled such seemingly one-sided "influence." See such works as Irokawa Daikichi (*Kitamura Tōkoku*, 1994) and Izuhara Takatoshi (*Issetsu Nihon kindai bungaku* [*Different Views on Modern Japanese Literature*], 2010), for example. Another scholarly tendency is to shed light on Tōkoku's relationship to Christianity, especially in order to highlight the connection between his writings and "interiority." See Walker, *The Japanese Novel of the Meiji Period*, 62–79, and Edward Fowler, *The Rhetoric of Confession: Shishōsetsu in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 77–86. Regardless of what they focus on, what does not falter in these works is the representation of mystified "Kitamura Tōkoku" who died for literature.

284. Discussing Tōkoku's advocacy of pure literature, scholars are complicit in the perpetuation of the notion of pure literature. Yushi Ito's work examines the debate from Aizan's viewpoint, which is quite unusual. However, Ito still ends up emphasizing the ultimate difference between Tōkoku who favors "'inner life' of the individual" and Aizan who prioritizes "the immediate social relevance of literature." Yushi Ito, *Yamaji Aizan and His Time: Nationalism and Debating Japanese History* (Global Oriental: Folkestone, 2007), 29–39.

285. The deification of Tōkoku and the notion of pure literature became intensified the most in the immediate post-World War II period. This needs further scrutinization.

The historicization of Tōkoku involves an oddity, however. In fact, what later scholars considered as the stronghold of pure literature oftentimes takes its point of departure in Tōkoku's criticism that thematized pure literature. His criticism provided the ground upon which pure literature has been sustained, and, continuous discussions about pure literature were sprouting precisely out of Tōkoku's thinking and writing about it. It is this notion of the purity in literature, claimed so by criticism, that has been long defining, if not haunting the history of Japanese literature in and since the Meiji period up until recently.²⁸⁶

This oddity in the scholarly treatment of pure literature generates a certain kind of anxiety. To reiterate: the claim for purity becomes conceivable only when there are other impure factors available. Pure literature, defined as the outcome of purely poetic and aesthetic linguistic practices, is always in need of discovering something other than itself, against which it can secure its identity. Pure literature cannot control itself, despite its autonomous appearance, as it requires what comes at odds with itself in order to sustain itself. Pure literature's instability thus fomented anxiety, and this anxiety serves as a source of obsessive compulsions to identify pure literature by finding what it is not and quarantining it.²⁸⁷ The proliferation of scholarly discussions about pure literature and further deification of Tōkoku are the natural, structural outcome of the configuration of pure literature.

Literature in the purest form: although pure literature has been an influential framework in the historicization process of Japanese literature since the Meiji period, the

286. Kōjin Karatani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature* and Suzuki Sadami's *Nihon no "bungaku" gainen* (*The Concept of "Literature" in Japan*) (Tokyo: Sakuhinsha, 1998) are exemplary attempts to destabilize narratives that have taken pure literature for granted.

287. One of the recent examples is the debate between Shōno Yoriko and Ōtsuka Eiji that took place from the late 1990s into the early 2000s.

concept itself is extremely fugitive, as it took its origin not in pure literature itself but in criticism. What facilitated pure literature was Tōkoku's criticism. What rendered it elusive was also his criticism. This antinomy entailed in criticism—criticism that simultaneously promised and betrayed the purity of literature—is not something that can be solved logically. As such, criticism imposes upon whoever is confronting it a task to remain in its very fugitiveness and continues to pose a question of how to live the unsolvable antinomy.

APPENDIX

List of Essays Relevant to Debates

The "Literature and Nature" Debate ("Bungaku to shizen" *ronsō*)

- Saganoya Omuro. *Kusaretamago*. *Miyako no hana* 2, no. 9 (February, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Kan'in no kūki, fujunketsu no kūki." *Jogaku zasshi* 150 (February 23, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Bunshōjō no risō." *Jogaku zasshi* 152 (March 9, 1889).
- Anonymous. "*Kusaretamago*." *Jogaku zasshi* 152 (March 9, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Shōsetsuka no chakugan." *Jogaku zasshi* 154 (March 23, 1889).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Baishō no rigai" ("Merits and Demerits of Prostitution"). *Eisei shinshi* 1 (March 25, 1889).
- Anonymous. "Ichikawa Danjūrō." *Jiji shinpō*, March 30, 1889.
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Ichikawa Danjūrō to *Eisei shinshi*" ("Ichikawa Danjūrō and *Eisei shinshi*"). *Jogaku zasshi* 156 (April 6, 1889).
- Tokutomi Sohō. "Genron no fujiyū to bungaku no hattatsu." *Kokumin no tomo* 48 (April 22, 1889).
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "*Jiji shinpō* to *Jogaku zasshi* ni tadasu." *Kokumin no tomo* 48 (April 22, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Fujunketsu no genkōishi, fujunketsu ni taisuru genkōishi" ("Impure Behaviors and Thoughts, Behaviors and Thoughts toward Impurity"). *Jogaku zasshi* 159 (April 27, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Bungaku to shizen." *Jogaku zasshi* 159 (April 27, 1889).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu." *Kokumin no tomo* 50 (May 11, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "*Kokumin no tomo* dai gojū gō ni okeru 'Bungaku to shizen' o yomu, o kindokusu." *Jogaku zasshi* 162 (May 18, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Danjūrō to Okaru" ("Danjūrō and Okaru"). *Jogaku zasshi* 162 (May 18, 1889).
- Anonymous. "Joseito no hinkō" ("Morals of Female Students"). *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 31, 1889.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi shizen sūhaisha ni tadasu." *Kokumin no tomo* 52 (June 1, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Shizen sūhaisha no kotae." *Jogaku zasshi* 165 (June 8, 1889).
- Anonymous. "Jogakkō no akuhyō" ("Bad Rumors about Girl's School"). *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 8, 1889.
- Anonymous. "Jogakkō to joseito" ("Girl's School and Female Students"). *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 9, 1889.

- Anonymous. "Futatabi Jogakkō to joseito o ronzu" ("Discussing Girl's School and Female Students Again"). *Yomiuri shinbun*, June 13, 1889.
- Maruyama Michikazu. "Mori Rintarō kun ni yokoyari o teisu." *Jogaku zasshi* 166 (June 15, 1889).
- Anonymous. "Meiji nijūninen no jogakkai" ("The Field of Women's Education in the 22nd Year of Meiji"). *Jogaku zasshi* 193 (December 25, 1889).
- Banchō Kozō. "Yomiuri shinbun josei ni kansuru kiji o yomite" ("Reading Yomiuri shinbun's Reports on Women"). *Jogaku zasshi* 202 (March 1, 1890).
- Anonymous. "Jogakusei no fūbun" ("Rumors on Female Students"). *Jogaku zasshi* 202 (March 1, 1890).

The Abridged Theory of the Novel Debate ("Shōsetsuron ryaku" ronsō)

- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Shōsetsuron ryaku." *Jogaku zasshi* 177 (August 31, 1889).
- Uchida Roan. "Jogaku zasshi no shōsetsuron." *Tokyo yoron shinshi* 412 (September 11, 1889).
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Jogaku zasshi shasetsu, 'Shōsetsu, shōsetsuka'." *Kokumin no tomo* 62 (September 12, 1889).
- Uchida Roan. "'Shōsetsuron ryaku' shitsugi." *Jogaku zasshi* 179 (September 14, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Mōshihiraki jōjō." *Jogaku zasshi* 180 (September 21, 1889).
- Uchida Roan. "'Shōsetsuron ryaku' hissha ni saimonsu." *Jogaku zasshi* 182 (October 5, 1889).
- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Tsutsushinde ryūhai ni mōsu." *Jogaku zasshi* 182 (October 5, 1889).
- Uchida Roan. "Tsutsushinde Jogaku kisha ni shaji o teisu" ("Humbly Thanking Iwamoto"). *Jogaku zasshi* 183 (October 19, 1889).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Gendai shoka no shōsetsuron wo yomu." *Shigarami zōshi* 2 (November 25, 1889).

The Extreme Decline of Literature Debate (*bungaku kyokusui ronsō*)

- Anonymous. "Bungaku gokusui (kyokusui)" (Part One) ("Extreme Decline of Literature"). *Jogaku zasshi* 191 (December 14, 1889).
- Anonymous. "Bungaku gokusui (kyokusui)" (Part Two). *Jogaku zasshi* 192 (December 21, 1889).
- Kitamura Tōkoku. "Tōsei bungaku no ushiomoyō" ("The Currents of Contemporary Literature"). *Jogaku zasshi* 194 (January 1, 1890).
- Anonymous. "Bungaku kyokusui no gen'in oyobi sono kyōseihō" ("The Cause of the Extreme Decline of Literature and its Remedies"). *Jogaku zasshi* 195 (January 11, 1890).
- Isogai Unpō. "Sei? Sui?" ("Thriving? Declining?"). *Jogaku zasshi* 196 (January 18,

1890).

- Yamada Bimyō. "Bungaku kyokusui?" ("Extreme Decline of Literature?"). *Iratsume* 39 (January 22, 1890).

- Uchida Roan. "Shimada Saburō shi ni tadasu" ("Asking Mr. Shimada Saburō"). *Kokumin shinbun*, February 1 to February 2, 1890.

- Anonymous. "Bungaku sekai no kinkyō" ("The Recent Situation of the World of Literature"). *Asano shinbun*, February 27, 1890.

The "Dancing Girl" Debate ("Maihime" *ronsō*)

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Maihime." *Kokumin no tomo* 69 (January 3, 1890).

- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Kokumin no tomo shin'nen furoku." *Jogaku zasshi* 195 (January 11, 1890).

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Meiji nijūni nen hihyōka no shigan." *Shigarami zōshi* 4 (January 25, 1890).

- Yamaguchi Toratarō. "Maihime saihyō." *Shigarami zōshi* 4 (January 25, 1890).

- Noguchi Neisai. "Maihime o yomite." *Shigarami zōshi* 4 (January 25, 1890).

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime." *Kokumin no tomo* 72 (February 3, 1890).

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Sōjitsuron." *Kōko shinbun*, March 20 to 30, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho." *Shigarami zōshi* 7 (April 25, 1890).

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime saihyō" (Part One). *Kōko shinbun*, April 27, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part One) ("Another Letter to Kidori Han'nojō"). *Kokumin shinbun*, April 28, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime saihyō" (Part Two). *Kōko shinbun*, April 29, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part Two). *Kokumin shinbun*, April 30, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime sanhyō" (Part One). *Kōko shinbun*, April 30, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part Three). *Kokumin shinbun*, May 2, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime sanhyō" (Part Two). *Kōko shinbun*, May 3, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime shihyō" ("Fourth Criticism to 'The Dancing Girl'"). *Kōko shinbun*, May 3, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime sanhyō" (Part Three). *Kōko shinbun*, May 4, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part Four). *Kokumin shinbun*, May 4, 1890.

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Maihime sanhyō" (Part Four). *Kōko shinbun*, May 6, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part Five). *Kokumin shinbun*, May 5, 1890.

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Kidori Han'nojō ni atauru sho" (Part Six). *Kokumin shinbun*, May 6, 1890.

The Tales of the Floating Castle debate (*Ukishiro monogatari ronsō*)

- Yano Ryūkei. *Hōchi ibun: Ukishiro monogatari* (*Strange Rumors from Hōchi: The Tales of the Floating Castle*). Tokyo: Hōchisha, 1890.
- Morita Shiken. (Prefatory note to *Hōchi ibun: Ukishiro monogatari*). Tokyo: Hōchisha, 1890.
- Tokutomi Sohō. (Prefatory note to *Hōchi ibun: Ukishiro monogatari*). Tokyo: Hōchisha, 1890.
- Nakae Chōmin. "Shōsetsu *Ukishiro monogatari* no hihyō" ("Criticism on *The Tales of the Floating Castle*"). Tokyo: Hōchisha, 1890.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "*Hōchi ibun*." *Kokumin no tomo* 78 (April 3, 1890).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "*Hōchi ibun* ni daisu" ("On *Strange Rumors from Hōchi*"). *Shigarami zōshi* 7 (April 25, 1890).
- Uchida Roan. "*Ukishiro monogatari* o yomu" ("Reading *The Tales of the Floating Castle*"). *Kokumin shinbun*, May 8 to May 23, 1890.
- Yano Ryūkei. "*Ukishiro monogatari ritsuan no shimatsu*" ("Explaining How *The Tales of the Floating Castle* Came into Being"). *Kokumin shinbun*, June 28 to July 2, 1890.
- Uchida Roan. "Ryūkei koji ni tadasu" ("Question to Ryūkei"). *Kokumin shinbun*, July 15 to July 16, 1890.
- Uchida Roan. "Gendai bungaku" ("Contemporary Literature"). *Kokumin no tomo* 137, 138, and 140 (November 23, December 3, and December 23, 1891).

The Causality Debate (*zaika ronsō*)

- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Zaika ron" (Part One). *Kōko shinbun*, April 1, 1890.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Zaika ron" (Part Two). *Kōko shinbun*, April 2, 1890.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Zaika ron" (Part Three). *Kōko shinbun*, April 3, 1890.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Zaika ron o yomite" ("Reading 'Theory of Causality'"). *Shigarami zōshi* 7 (April 25, 1890).
- Yamaguchi Toratarō. "Arisutoteresu to Ningetsu koji to" ("Aristotle and Ningetsu"). *Shigarami zōshi* 10 (January 25, 1890).

The "Account of Fleeting Bubbles" Debate ("*Utakata no ki*" *ronsō*)

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "*Utakata no ki*." *Shigarami zōshi* 11 (August 25, 1890).
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "*Utakata no ki*." *Kokumin no tomo* 98 (October 23, 1890).

- Kōda Rohan. "Utakata no ki o yomite" ("Reading 'The Account of Fleeting Bubbles'"). *Shigarami zōshi* 13 (October 25, 1890).
- Shōtō. "Utakata no ki o yomu" ("Reading 'The Account of Fleeting Bubbles'"). *Shigarami zōshi* 13 (October 25, 1890).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Utakata no ki o yonde Ōgai o nonoshiri Fuchian o warau" ("Reading 'The Account of Fleeting Bubbles,' Insulting Ōgai, Laughing at Fuchian"). *Shigarami zōshi* 13 (October 25, 1890).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Ningetsu koji yo" ("Dear Mr. Ningetsu"). *Kokumin shinbun*, November 19, 1890.
- Uchida Roan. "Gaikei ronsha" ("Believer of External Form"). *Kokumin shinbun*, November 22, 1890.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Ōgai ni yosu" ("To Ōgai"). *Shigarami zōshi* 14 (November 25, 1890).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Ningetsu no yūgenron ni kotaure sho" ("Note to Respond to Ningetsu's Theory of Delicate Grace"). *Shigarami zōshi* 14 (November 25, 1890).
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Ōgai no yūgenron ni kotaure sho" ("Note to Respond to Ōgai's Theory of Delicate Grace"). *Kokkai*, December 3 and December 4, 1890.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Ningetsu ga futatabi ware ni kotaure sho o mite" ("Seeing Ningetsu's Note to Respond to Me Again"). *Shigarami zōshi* 15 (December 25, 1890).

The Negation of the Ideal Debate (*botsurisō ronsō*)

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Shinsaku jūniban no uchi kihatsu yonban gōhyō." *Yomiuri shinbun*, December 7 to December 15, 1890.
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Bunkai meisho sokoshirazu no mizuumi." In *Yomiuri shinbun* 4866 *gō furoku*, 1–17. Tokyo: Nisshūsha, 1891.
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Baika shishū o yomite" ("Reading Baika's Poetry Collection"). *Yomiuri shinbun*, March 22 to March 24, 1891.
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Azusamiko." *Yomiuri shinbun*, May 16 to June 17, 1891.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Shōyōshi no shinsaku jūniban no uchi kihatsu yonban gōhyō, Baika shishū hyō oyobi Azusamiko." *Shigarami zōshi* 24 (September 25, 1891).
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Shēkusupiya kyakuhon hyōchū shogen." *Waseda bungaku* 1 (October 20, 1891).
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Ware ni arazushite nanji ni ari." *Waseda bungaku* 3 (November 15, 1891).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Waseda Bungaku no botsurisō." *Shigarami zōshi* 27 (December 25, 1891).
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Uyū sensei ni shasu." *Waseda bungaku* 7 (January 15, 1892).
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Emiru Zora ga botsurisō." *Shigarami zōshi* 28 (January 25, 1892).
- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Botsurisō no gogi o benzu." *Waseda bungaku* 8 (January 30,

1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Shigarami zōshi nami o kari kumo o waku" ("Shigarami zōshi, Waging Waves, Boiling Clouds"). *Waseda bungaku* 8 (January 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Uyū sensei ni kotau" (Part One and Part Two). *Waseda bungaku* 9 (February 15, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Shōyōshi ga hiru no yume." *Waseda bungaku* 9 (February 15, 1892).

- Uchida Roan. "Meiji nijūyonen bungaku o omou" ("Reflecting on Literature in the 24th Year of Meiji"). *Waseda bungaku* 9 (February 15, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Uyū sensei ni kotau" (Part Three). *Waseda bungaku* 10 (February 29, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Sono i ha tagaeri." *Waseda bungaku* 10 (February 29, 1892).

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Waseda Bungaku no bokkyakurisō." *Shigarami zōshi* 30 (March 25, 1892).

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Shōyōshi to Uyū sensei to." *Shigarami zōshi* 30 (March 25, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Waseda Bungaku-gayatsu Jibun Hyōron-mura no engi." *Waseda bungaku* 12 (March 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Yosete higashi yori nishi yori semaru." *Waseda bungaku* 12 (March 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Botsurisō no yurai." *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Jintō ni uma o tatete tekishōgun ni monomōsu." *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Jōnan Hyōron jōshu to Shōyōshi tonon pāre." *Waseda bungaku* 13 (April 15, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Gazokusecchūnosuke ga gunbai." *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Nyūdō Jōken ga gunhyōgi." *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Monju Bosatsu no gōiken." *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892).

- Tsubouchi Shōyō/Yūzō. "Shōyōshi ga yabumi." *Waseda bungaku* 14 (April 30, 1892).

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Waseda Bungaku no kō-botsurisō." *Shigarami zōshi* 33 (June 25, 1892).

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Mumeishi ni kotauru sho" ("Note to Respond to Mr. Anonymous"). *Shigarami zōshi* 44 (May 25, 1893).

The "Letter Bearer" Debate ("Fumizukai" *ronsō*)

- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Fumizukai." *Shincho hyakushu* 12 (January 28, 1891).

- Iwamoto Yoshiharu. "Fumizukai." *Jogaku zasshi* 251 (February 6, 1891).
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Shincho hyakushu daijūnigō fumitsukai" ("Fumitsukai in the 12th Issue of *Shincho hyakushu*"). *Kokkai*, February 14 and February 15, 1891.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Ningetsu koji ni atau" ("Addressing Mr. Ningetsu"). *Kokumin shinbun*, February 16, 1891.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Ōgai ryōshi ni kotau" ("Answering Ōgai"). *Kokkai*, February 17, 1891.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Futatabi Ningetsu koji ni atau" ("Addressing Mr. Ningetsu Again"). *Kokumin shinbun*, February 18, 1891.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Futatabi Ōgai ryōshi ni kotau" ("Answering Ōgai Again"). *Kokkai*, February 19, 1891.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Mitabi Ningetsu koji ni atau" ("Addressing Mr. Ningetsu for the Third Time"). *Kokumin shinbun*, February 20, 1891.
- Ishibashi Ningetsu. "Mitabi Ōgai ryōshi ni kotau" ("Answering Ōgai for the Third Time"). *Kokkai*, February 21, 1891.
- Mori Ōgai/Rintarō. "Yotabi Ningetsu koji ni atau" ("Addressing Mr. Ningetsu for the Fourth Time"). *Kokumin shinbun*, February 23, 1891.

The Interrelations with Life Debate (*jīnsei sōshō ronsō*)

- Kitamura Tōkoku. "Enseishika to jōsei." *Jogaku zasshi* 303 and 304 (February 6 and 20, 1892).
- Kitamura Tōkoku. "Takai ni taisuru kan'nen" ("The Concept on the Other World"). *Kokumin no tomo* 169 and 170 (October 13 and 23, 1892).
- Yamaji Aizan. "Kinsei busshitsuteki no shinpo" ("Materialistic Progress of Recent Times"). *Kokumin no tomo* 170 (October 23, 1892). Intermittently serialized until December 13.
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