

The Concept of “Literature” in Japan

著者	SUZUKI Sadami, TYLER Royall
year	2006-03
図書名	The Concept of “Literature” in Japan
シリーズ	Nichibunken Monograph Series ; 8
URL	http://doi.org/10.15055/00006414

CHAPTER 6

THE RISE OF MODERN “LITERATURE” IN JAPAN

6.1 Ideas of “Improvement”

6.1.1 The Idea of “Art” (*Bijutsu*)

The newly imported idea of *bijutsu* 美術 (or *geijutsu* 芸術), that is, of “art,” began to spread fairly widely in Japan in the late 1870s. What with the founding of the School of Art (*Bijutsu Gakkō*) in 1876, and the encouraging stance adopted by the Ministry of Education, the fortunes of Western-style painting rose from about 1877 on. There is no doubt, however, that, as has often been noted, a major impetus to the spread of the notion of “art” was provided by Ernest Fenollosa (1853-1908), an American who lectured in political science, economics, and philosophy at Tokyo University. Fenollosa had studied at Harvard under the well-known Hegelian philosopher Bowen, was a devotee of the philosophy of Spencer, and was also active in the arts. Soon after his arrival in Japan he seems to have attended the lectures of Antonio Fontanesi (1818-1882), who taught in the Faculty of Engineering’s School of Art. Unenthusiastic about his lectures at Tokyo University, he went on walking tours of temples and shrines, inspired by his interest in Buddhism, and eagerly collected art.

In 1882 Fenollosa was invited to give a lecture to the Ryūchikai 龍池会, a group sworn to reverse the decline that had overtaken Japanese-style painting (*nihonga* 日本画) as a consequence of the popularity of painting in the Western style (*yōga* 洋画). This lecture, entitled “*Bijutsu shinsetsu*” 美術真説 launched Fenollosa as a sort of savior of the Japanese art world. During his stay in Japan he busied himself, with the blessing of the Ministry of Education, with unearthing cultural artifacts, especially treasures of Buddhist art; while after his return to the United States he worked at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, where he was active in introducing Japanese art.¹

Fenollosa praised painting and sculpture as the flower of the civilizations of China and Japan, but it is easy to imagine that his enthusiasm was influenced by the wave of *japonisme* that swept Europe and America in the second half of the nineteenth century. This wave spread above all among artists in Europe. Judging from the admonishment Fukuzawa Yukichi addressed to the student kanshi fans at Keiō Gijuku Daigaku, Japanese intellectuals of the 1880s were aware of it as well.

However, *japonisme* was diverse, depending on the time period and the mode of reception. In France, the late Impressionist painters found in the primary greens, blues, and reds of Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849) a new range of color sensibility, while in *fin-de-siècle* England Aubrey Beardsley (1872-1898) referred not to color, but to a new method of drawing based on line

¹ Yamaguchi 1982; and Yanagida 1965, vol. 2, pp. 35-44, 80-96.

as the “Japanese style.” Elsewhere, the blue and white check pattern known as *ichimatsu moyō* 市松模様, detailed rendering of natural scenes, fascination with the kimono, and many other aspects of the phenomenon were often difficult to distinguish from the vogue for *chinoiserie* that spread from the eighteenth century on. What, then, of Fenollosa himself?

In his 1882 lecture, Fenollosa proposed that the heart of beauty is an ideal, or an *idée* (*myōsō* 妙想), and that is what gives humankind true happiness and pleasure. Therefore, he continued, art is close in value to religion. The painter wields as he will a talent bestowed on him by heaven, and the essence of art is to manifest a lofty ideal issuing from divine inspiration.² This sort of German idealist aesthetics represented the general understanding at the time, and its spiritualist emphasis often involved praise of the spirituality of the people. In other words, the position taken by Fenollosa was by no means his alone. In many ways it was consonant with the late nineteenth century anti-realist reaction in Europe, and particularly with the Symbolist movement.³ Thus it was Fenollosa’s emphasis on the spiritual dimension of ethnic religiosity, or else his near-symbolist aesthetics, that led him to praise Japanese and especially Japanese Buddhist art. In that sense his message well conveys something of the aesthetic background of late nineteenth-century European *japonisme*. His call to rebuild the tradition of Japanese art coincides nicely with the call to rebuild the tradition of Japanese scholarship, which came to be heard in the 1880s. One easily imagines it giving further momentum to the latter.

Concerning the spread of the term *bijutsu* (art), Yanagida Izumi observed that the art magazines of the 1880s more and more often used this term to refer to music, poetry, and dance, and he wrote that poetry came normally to be seen as *bijutsu* from 1884 or 1885 on.⁴ It was somewhat later that fiction and drama came to be seen as a province of art. In 1885 and 1886, at the request of the Ministry of Education, Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847-1901) translated *L’Esthétique* (1878) by Eugène Véron (in translation, *Ishi bigaku* 維氏美学), which assumed a discourse on the novel strongly colored by *romantisme*, and the history of the novel up through the Naturalist movement. It seems to have gained ready acceptance. However Tsubouchi Shōyō, who was then writing *Shōsetsu shinzui*, is said not to have referred to it.

This was an age when attempts were made in many domains to define the future direction in which the national culture was to advance, and from among them, along with the idea of “social improvement” (*shakai kairyō* 社会改良), there emerged a movement advocating “improvement” in the domain of the literary arts as well. Associated with the modern European view of the literary arts (*bungei*) as a branch of art (*bijutsu*), it also contained elements of resistance to European civilization, or of consciousness of Japan’s role in reconciling East and West. It appears to have risen first from the world of poetry, which certainly boasted a proud “tradition” of its own. Poetry gained recognition as “art” long before fiction or drama.

2 After the Sino-Japanese War, Uchida Roan noted in “Sengo no bungaku” 戦後の文学 the Western taste for *japonisme*, attributed it to mere exoticism, and warned against its spread.

3 In “Shōchō to shite no kanji: Fenollosa to tōyō” 象徴としての漢字—フェノロサと東洋 (Usami 1997), Saitō Mareshi 斎藤希史 pointed out the contemporaneity of symbolist aesthetics and of the view of Chinese characters set forth by Fenollosa in 1890, after his return to Japan; and the influence of the former.

4 Yanagida 1965, vol. 2, p. 50.

6.1.2 The Improvement of Poetry

In the field of *kanshi*, one might call the emergence of Mori Kainan 森槐南, who reformulated the rules for verse in the Chinese manner and aimed to develop a new poetic style, a manifestation of this trend. Meanwhile, an experiment in writing Japanese poetry comparable to the modern poetry of Europe appeared in the form of *Shintaishi shō* 新体詩抄 (2 vols.), which included work by Toyama Masakazu 外山正一 (1848-1900), Yatabe Ryōkichi 矢田部良吉 (1851-1899), Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855-1944), and Maruya Zenshichi 丸屋善七 (1837-1901). In the book’s preface, Inoue Tetsujirō explained the fundamental idea underlying the composition of poetry in the new style. He wrote:

It is a great task, and one quite impossible to accomplish without studying the ancient and modern poetry of China and Japan. Indeed, even one who does so, who masters the best of both, and who then wishes to compose poetry in the new style, cannot yet tell whether he has succeeded or failed.⁵

In this passage Inoue is keenly aware that ardor to learn the very flower of the poetry, ancient and modern, of China, Japan, and the West, and so to give new form and substance to Japanese poetry, has only just begun to undertake its first, tentative experiments. So began the attempt to create a “poetry in the new style,” compounded of the fixed, seven-five-seven rhythm, of Japanese words both elegant and common, and of lexical items derived from Chinese. It was not long before there appeared five collections under the title *Shintai shiika* 新体詩歌, edited by Takeuchi Takanobu 竹内隆信. Their publication coincided on the one hand with that of translations of Western poetry and hymns, with the writing of elementary school songs, and, on the other hand, with a movement for “the improvement of waka poetry.” Perhaps the forerunners of this last had been the late Tokugawa-period waka poet Kagawa Kageki 香川景樹 (1768-1843), who had advocated composing waka not in the ancient, classical language but in the contemporary vernacular, and Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村, with his practice of *haishi* 俳詩.

One must not overlook the early Meiji movement to “improve” waka poetry, championed by such men as Suematsu Kenchō 末松謙澄 in *Kagaku ron* 歌学論 (1884-85) and Konakamura Gishō 小中村義象 in *Kadō no enkaku* 歌道の沿革 (1886), driven as it was by the urge to grasp waka anew as the traditional *bungaku* of Japan. Konakamura Gishō, a graduate of the Department of Classics in the Tokyo Imperial University College of Letters, wrote in 1887, together with Hagino Yoshiyuki 萩野由之, *Kokugaku waka kairyō ron* 国学和歌改良論 that placed him at the forefront of the movement under discussion. In 1889, Hagino and Ochiai Naobumi set about establishing a Kokugo Denshūsho 国語伝習所 (Institute for Propagation of the National Language). Then, in 1890, all three together began collaborating to edit a twenty-three volume collection of prose fiction entitled *Nihon bungaku zensho* 日本文学全書, published by Hakubunkan.

Nihon bungaku zensho appeared roughly in parallel with *Nihon kagaku zensho* 日本歌学全書 (a collection of treatises on waka), edited by a father and son pair: Sasaki Hirotsuna 佐佐木弘

⁵ Inoue Tetsujirō 1972, p. 3.

綱 (1828-1891) and Sasaki Nobutsuna 信綱 (1872-1963). These two sets together might be called the first in a long line of “compendia” or “complete collections” of Japanese literature. Neither included the kanshi or Chinese prose of such Japanese writers as Arai Hakuseki 新井白石 or Rai San’yō 賴山陽. However, the same Hakubunkan published a *Kinko bungei onko sōsho* 近古文芸温故叢書 that included a good deal of such material.

In 1888, Sasaki Hirotsuna wrote “Chōka kairyō ron” 長歌改良論, while at the time of the Sino-Japanese War his son, Sasaki Nobutsuna, published a travel account in “improved ‘long poem’” (*kairyō chōka* 改良長歌) form, in the traditional seven-five-seven rhythm and replete with such katakana names as Arupusu (Alps) and Sentoherena (Saint Helena).⁶ It was indistinguishable from “poetry in the new style” (*shintaiishi*). Sasaki Nobutsuna’s enthusiasm to improve waka poetry led to the founding of the poetry journal *Kokoro no hana* 心の花, and in 1893 Ochiai Naobumi founded the Asakasha あさ香社 (Asaka Society), dedicated to reforming the tanka. Yosano Tekkan 与謝野鉄幹 (1873-1935), an Asakasha member, published in 1896 a collection of chōka, tanka, and even renga and kanshi, entitled *Tōzai nanboku* 東西南北, which celebrated the nationalism and romanticism of the new nation-state. Ochiai Naobumi’s preface to the volume makes it clear that Tekkan’s work, too, was described as “poetry in the new style.”⁷ Then in 1899 Tekkan founded the Shinshisha 新詩社 (New Poetry Society), and, the following year, began publishing the poetry journal *Myōjō* 明星.

In comparison with these developments in the world of poetry proper, the movement toward improvement, i.e., modernization in the world of renga and haikai—genres deeply involved with word-play of all kinds—arose only relatively late. Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867-1902) wrote *Haikai taiyō* 俳諧大要, in which he attempted to apply to haikai the Western painting technique of *shasei* 写生 (sketch from nature) and undertook to reform the *hokku* 発句, only in 1895, after the end of the Sino-Japanese War. The next year he serialized his “Haiku mondō” 俳句問答 in the journal *Nihon* 日本, and in 1898 he published *Haiku nyūmon* 俳句入門. That same year, a collection entitled *Shin haiku* 新俳句 appeared from the publisher Min’yūsha. It seems to be at about this time that the name of the form changed from haikai to haiku.⁸ Finally in 1900, in the journal *Hototogisu*, Shiki proposed, with examples, a kind of writing that he called *jojibun* 叙事文 and that applied the principle of *shasei* to prose. The piece was to exert a great influence on Japanese prose writing.

6.1.3 The Shift in the Position of the Novel

What became, then, of the position taken by Fukuchi Ōchi in “Nihon bungaku no fushin o tanzu,” to the effect that Japanese poetry has its own uniqueness and that fiction (*shōsetsu*) is vulgar and even contemptible? Uchida Roan 内田魯庵 (1868-1929) wrote as follows in “Yo ga bungakusha to

6 Sasaki Nobutsuna 1895, p. 126.

7 Suzuki Sadami 1997e.

8 The term remained “haikai” well into the Meiji period. The change to “haiku” occurred about the time, in 1898, when the literary section of the magazine *Taiyō* adopted the latter as a heading. After briefly reverting to “haikai,” *Taiyō* definitively adopted “haiku” in 1899. (Communication from Tsubouchi Toshinori 坪内稔典.)

narishi keiro” 予が文学者となりし経路 (1909), in the course of reminiscing about the 1890s:

In those days literary people occupied a very high position in society. After all, in those days even politicians wrote novels. One almost felt as though a politician who had never written a novel was hardly a politician at all. Men like Suehiro Tetchō and Suematsu Kenchō wrote their novels then. The standing of the writer leapt over that of Disraeli or Thackeray, to attain that of Dickens.⁹

It was in 1909 that Education Minister Komatsubara 小松原 invited Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴, Mori Ōgai 森鷗外, Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石, and Shimamura Hōgetsu 島村抱月 to his official residence—a moment symbolic of the treatment of famous writers as major figures in society, although Roan’s reporting of it may have contained something of his characteristic irony. At any rate, it will be worth taking a look at these novels written by politicians.

From the 1870s into the 1880s, the politicians of this age of the Freedom and Human Rights Movement sought material to promote their own political message in the work of British and French writers, publishing a vast number of adaptations of novels with the political content of which they were in sympathy and adding further ideas of their own. They emulated Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), whose domestic policies in the age of Queen Victoria were conservative and profoundly monarchist, and whose foreign views strongly favored imperialism; William Gladstone (1809-1898), who, in contrast, carried out liberal domestic reform; or Victor Hugo (1802-1885), who, despite exile for his opposition to the imperial restoration of mid-nineteenth-century France, published such works as *Les Misérables* and became a symbol of republicanism throughout Europe. Novels of this kind are known as *seiji shōsetsu* 政治小説 (political novels).¹⁰ Among them can be counted *Mirai no yume* 未来之夢 by Tsubouchi Shōyō, whose sympathies lay with the Rikken Kaishin Tō 立憲改進黨 (Constitutional Reform Party); for even writers not otherwise active in politics treated political themes.

With respect to adaptations of Western novels, members of the progressive wing of the Jiyū Tō 自由党 (Liberal Party) published several works inspired by the long novels of Alexandre Dumas (père), which were set against the background of the French Revolution; and others based on Victor Hugo’s biographical novels, or his shorter fiction. Those drawn from Dumas include *Futsukoku kakumei kigen: Nishinoumi chishio no saarashi* 仏国革命起源 西洋血潮小暴風 by Sakurada Momoe 桜田百衛 (1882), *Jiyū no gaika* 自由之凱歌 by Miyazaki Muryū 宮崎夢柳 (1882), and *Furansu taiheiki: Senketsu no hana* 仏蘭西太平記 鮮血の花, also by Miyazaki Muryū (1884). Novels modeled on Hugo’s biographical fiction included *Aikoku ikun* 愛国偉勳 by Takahashi Kiichi 高橋基一 (1887); while those derived from his shorter works were *Itsuka kihen: Eiyū no*

9 Uchida Roan *shū*, vol. 24, p. 299.

10 Between Toda Kindō’s 戸田欽堂 *Jōkai haran* 情海波瀾 (1880) and Hirotsu Ryūrō’s 広津柳浪 “Joshi sansei, shinchūrō” 女子参政・蜃中楼 (1887), Yanagida Izumi counted well over 200 “freedom and political rights novels” (“Seiji shōsetsu no ippan” 政治小説の一般) in *Meiji seiji shōsetsu shū*, vol. 1. In “Seiji shōsetsu no ippan (2)” (*Meiji seiji shōsetsu shū*, vol. 2), Yanagida counted about 450 “national power novels” (*kokken* 国権 *shōsetsu*), “exposure novels” (*bakuro* 暴露 *shōsetsu*), “women’s rights novels” (*joken* 女権 *shōsetsu*), and “socialist novels” (*shakaishugi* 社会主義 *shōsetsu*), excluding the group already cited, between 1887 and 1910.

kantan 五日紀変英雄の肝胆 by Noda Tōkichirō 野田藤吉郎 (1887). Ozaki Yukio 尾崎行雄 (1858-1954) of the Progressive Party (Kaishin Tō 改進黨) published *Shin Nippon* 新日本 (1886), patterned after a novel by Disraeli; while members of the Constitutional Monarchy Party (Teisei Tō 帝政黨) wrote such adaptations of Disraeli's novels as *Seitō yodan: Shun'ōden* 政黨余談春鶯囀 by Seki Naohiko 関直彦 (1884), *San'ei sōbi: Seikai no jōha* 三英双美政海の情波 by Watanabe Osamu 渡辺治 (1886), *Seikai bōken: Daitan shosei* 政海冒険大胆書生 by Inoue Tsutomu 井上勤 (1887), and *Kontarinī monogatari* 昆太利物語 (*Contarini Fleming*, 1832), translated by Tsukahara Shizumu 塚原靖 and Fukuchi Ochi (1888-90). There were also adaptations of novels by Sir Walter Scott, such as *Bairai yokun: Seiji shōsetsu* 梅蕾余黨政治小説 by Ushiyama Kakudō 牛山鶴堂 (1886). It is probably fair to say that these political novels swept away, at least to some degree, the idea that fiction was only for women.

Tokutomi Roka 徳富蘆花 (1868-1927) wrote in his autobiographical novel *Omoide no ki* 思出の記 (1901):

Like a rising tide, the times have changed. We who, two or three years earlier, had lost ourselves in *Sanguozhi* 三国志, and whose heart beat at the exploits of Zhang Fei 張飛 on Changban Bridge 長板橋, now found ourselves devouring *Seiyō chishio no saarashi* and *Jiyū no gaika* . . . Then it was the turn of *Keikoku*, and I cannot even count the times we read through the night, ruining our eyes on the statesmanship of Epaminondas, Pelopidas, and Thebes.¹¹

Keikoku bidan 経国美談 (1883-84), by the Progressive Party politician Yano Ryūkei 矢野龍溪, is a political novel set during the Theban Revolution of ancient Greece. Edited from dictated speech, it constitutes a visible attempt to move beyond the *kanbun kuzushi* 漢文くずし style typical of such works, toward one closer to normal Japanese. Roka ruined his eyes on it at fourteen or fifteen, at the time an age when most people had been working already for three or four years. In 1891, near the very beginning of his venture with *shinpa* 新派 theater, Kawakami Otojirō 川上音二郎 (1864-1911) produced a stage version of it in Tokyo. Such was the power of Yano's novel to set young men's hearts beating and to penetrate even the popular consciousness. It surely did a great deal to raise the standing of fiction among society at large and to bring the written language closer to the spoken.

In 1888, Uchida Roan wrote as follows in “Yamada Bimyō Taijin no shōsetsu” 山田美妙大人の小説:

The world of Japanese fiction had been in decline ever since the Restoration until, two or three years ago, a wind of improvement arose somewhere and began to blow. I refer to *Keikoku bidan* and *Shosei katagi*. Anyone who has glanced over two or three fascicles of *Hakkenden* 八犬伝 [1814-42, by Takizawa Bakin] and looked through the forty-five pages of *Shōsetsu shinzui* is now discussing fiction and pursuing popular

11 Tokutomi Roka, *Omoide no ki*, in *Izumi Kyōka, Tokutomi Roka shū* 泉鏡花・徳富蘆花集 (*Gendai Nihon bungaku kai shū*, vol. 9), Chikuma Shobō, 1967, p. 189.

favor by concocting visions of the future and piecing together political novels.¹²

This passage pokes fun at the sudden popularity of writing and discussing fiction, but it cites as a “wind of improvement” for the novel the appearance of *Keikoku bidan* and of Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Tōsei shosei katagi* 当世書生氣質 and *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓, both published in 1885-86. No doubt it is fair to say that the “wind of improvement” in question, together with a successful experiment to bring the spoken and written languages closer together, arose from the genre of the political novel.¹³ Note that, in Roan’s passage, “visions of the future” (*miraiki* 未来記) refers to a device designed to evade censorship and adopted for example by Suehiro Tetchō in *Nijū sannan miraiki* 二十三年未来記 and *Seiji shōsetsu: Setchūbai* 政治小説雪中梅, both published in 1886. Roan discussed both at some length.

The political novel changed in various ways as the political climate evolved. Its course can be traced until about 1907, by which time such works as Edward Bellamy’s Socialist utopian novel *Looking Backward, 2000-1887* (1888) had been translated, as well as William Morris’s less optimistic rebuttal, *News from Nowhere* (1891). It was succeeded by the serialized storytelling on social issues (*shakai kōdan* 社会講談) published in 1920 in the magazine *Kaizō* 改造—one featuring, among others, Sakai Toshihiko 堺利彦 (1870-1933) and Shirayanagi Shūko 白柳秀湖 (1884-1950). At this point, however, let us turn our attention to Uchida Roan’s “wind of improvement” that blew in the world of fiction.

Uchida Roan concluded “Yamada Bimyō Taijin no shōsetsu” by recommending that Bimyō, a leader of the movements to improve the novel and to unify the spoken and written language, adopt a more realistic style in the manner of Émile Zola. He seems to have felt that in 1888 the improvement of the novel was not yet complete. Perhaps for that reason, the appearance of Tsubouchi Shōyō as novelist for a long time left Roan cold. In *Omoidasu hitobito* おもひ出す人々 (1907, revised 1925), Roan wrote as follows concerning the publication of *Tōsei shosei katagi*.

Once political circles had agreed that a National Diet was to be opened in a few years, a pause ensued, and the popular mind turned to bungaku. It was a time when translations of novels by Lytton and Scott appeared one after the other, to great acclaim, and when the literary creations of political figures enjoyed a new popularity. The new novel by Harunoya 春廼舎 [Tsubouchi Shōyō], who in those days enjoyed greater respect than any scholar, as well as recognition as a man of letters, aroused unprecedented popularity. A great man of letters’ venture into novel-writing gave the novel a new dignity and inspired further curiosity on the part of the world at large.¹⁴

Roan perceived that readers had found *Tōsei shosei katagi* almost indistinguishable from *gesaku* fiction and suggested that despite the curiosity it had aroused, it did not necessarily merit

¹² Uchida Roan *shū*, p. 130.

¹³ In *Kindai bungaku no tanjō* 近代文学の誕生, chapter 3.3), Ochi Haruo 越智治雄 treated the “movement to improve literature” (*bungaku kairyō undō* 文学改良運動) and discussed this issue in connection with *Keikoku bidan* and *Setchūbai*.

¹⁴ Uchida 1958, p. 88.

admiration. He wrote:

Up until that time, young men had placed all their hope for the future in politics, their ideal being to move straight from student lodgings into the career of the government adviser [*sangi* 参議] and thence into a post on the Grand Council of State [Dajōkan 太政官]. Thus they were more astonished to see a graduate of the greatest university in the land take a fancy pen name like Harunoya Oboro 春迺舍隴 and imitate *gesaku* fiction than they would have been to see a lawyer's daughter become an actress or some younger son of the aristocracy become a cinema producer. The stir created by *Tōsei shosei katagi* was due less to its literary merit than to the exalted standing of its author.

The world therefore had mixed feelings about it. At first no one ever imagined that, at a time when novels by political figures were enjoying a passing vogue, a great scholar might really and truly turn himself into a novelist. However, Takada Hanpō 高田半峰 reviewed it at length, while Harunoya immediately followed up on *Shōsetsu shinzui* by publishing *Imo to se kagami* 妹と背かがみ. Smollett, Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, and other British novelists were introduced to the public as great writers, and the novel rose from one bound in the lowly position occupied by *gesaku* to that of a major contribution to civilization—one to which no great scholar need blush to devote his efforts. The youth of Japan, who hitherto had seen no path before them but that of politics, discovered a new world and, as though suddenly awakened, rushed all together into literature. It was Harunoya's success that moved [Yamada] Bimyō and [Ozaki] Kōyō to dedicate their lives to literature.¹⁵

Young intellectuals had come to accept the idea that Western Europe accorded the novel great weight, and Tsubouchi Shōyō pursued his work against this background. It is at about this time that Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉 (1867-1903) and Yamada Bimyō 山田美妙 (1868-1910), both seven or eight years younger than Shōyō, formed the Ken'yūsha 硯友社 and began issuing the magazine *Garakuta bunko* 我楽多文庫 (“The rubbish library,” but also, by a play on words, “The library of many pleasures”). It is no wonder that Shōyō's success with *Shōsetsu shinzui* and *Tōsei shosei katagi* should have stimulated them. From about this time on there undoubtedly arose the possibility of a new kind of writing, quite different from the political novel.

When Tsubouchi Shōyō published the first volume of his translation (*Gaiseishi den* 慨世士伝, 1885) of *Rienzi*, a novel by the British political figure Edward Lytton (1803-1873), set in ancient Rome, he wrote in the preface that the principle aim of the novel should be not to encourage virtue and chastise vice (*kanzen chōaku* 勧善懲悪), but to portray human life and feelings (*ninjō setai* 人情世態). This view announced the principal thesis of *Shōsetsu shinzui*. However, it is noteworthy that in this preface Shōyō showed no sign of treating the political novel as a separate genre, but commended the portrayal of *ninjō setai* as the proper goal of any novel.

15 Uchida 1958, p. 88.

6.2 Is *Shōsetsu shinzui* Canonical?

6.2.1 Faithful Portrayal of Human Emotion and Life

The movement to “improve” the novel is often said, without any acknowledgement of the political novel, to have begun with the publication of *Tōsei shosei katagi* and *Shōsetsu shinzui*. The former, which satirizes the lives of contemporary students, is usually judged to have retained a strong and not necessarily desirable flavor of *gesaku* fiction. The latter, however, is accepted as having championed the project of “depicting from life” (*shajitsu* 写実) human experience and feelings—that is to say, of realism—and of having set the direction for the modern Japanese novel.¹⁶ What, then, does *Shōsetsu shinzui* advocate? Let us reread it from the standpoint of the evolution of the idea of “bungaku.”

The opening chapter of the work, entitled “*Shōsetsu sōron*” 小説総論, makes it clear that “the novel is art.”¹⁷ This assertion certainly seeks, in a time when the political novel reigned supreme, to define the proper direction for the “improvement” of *gesaku* as leading toward “art” (*bijutsu* 美術, or *geijutsu* 芸術), and thus to position the novel as a branch of linguistic art (*gen-go geijutsu* 言語芸術).

This opening section discusses Fenollosa’s then popular idea of *bijutsu*. Its proponents, Shōyō wrote, hold that art embodies a lofty inspiration issuing from the divine and that its aim is to lift the spirit of the viewer to new heights. He objected, however, that whether or not the viewer’s spirit rises is a matter merely of the outcome, and that to make this outcome the goal of the novel is to fetter the consciousness of the artist.¹⁸

16 For example, Nakamura Mitsuo 中村光夫 wrote in *Nihon no kindai shōsetsu* 日本の近代小説 (p. 40): “It has been taken for granted that the history of the Meiji novel begins at this point, and indeed, that [*Shōsetsu shinzui*] first introduced into Japan, in a clear form, the concept of the modern novel and at the same time adapted it to local conditions.” However, he went on, “Instead of aiming to reform the political novel, the *bungaku* of the intellectual class, this renewal of *bungaku* was aimed at modernizing it on the basis of the *gesaku* fiction passed on from Edo times. This seems to have exerted a considerable influence on the subsequent character of the modern Japanese novel.” Thus he discerned in Tsubouchi Shōyō’s program to “improve” *gesaku* fiction the origin of a distortion in the modern Japanese novel.

17 *Tsubouchi Shōyō shū* 坪内逍遙集, p. 4.

18 This has become the accepted view concerning the proposition that Tsubouchi Shōyō’s criticism of Fenollosa’s “*Bijutsu shinsetsu*” lecture is meant to apply only to its opening section. See, among others, Seki Ryōichi 1971a; and Tanizawa Eiichi 谷沢永一 1971. However, Wada Shigejirō 和田繁二郎 demonstrated in his “*Tsubouchi Shōyō*” (*Kindai bungaku sōseiki no kenkyū: Riarizumu no seisei*) that Shōyō’s rebuttal was addressed less to what Fenollosa had to say, than to a passage quoted by Shōyō from a piece of Ōuchi Seiran 大内青巒 (“*Dai Nihon bijutsu shinpō shogen*” 大日本美術新報緒言, *Dai Nihon bijutsu shinpō*, no. 1, November 1883.) He then quoted *Shōsetsu shinzui* (“Art is that which gives pleasure to the mind and eye, and lifts the spirit to a nobler plane”) in order to remark that “This can be said to represent a intellectual contradiction among enlightenment-minded intellectuals, who, even while rejecting a teleological sense of purpose in humanistic education (*jibun hatsuiku* 人文發育), could not in the end help seeking one.”

This is also the reason Shōyō avoided the “encourage virtue and chastise vice” stance of the late Tokugawa *gesaku* writers, especially Takizawa Bakin. It is well recognized that Bakin’s fertile imagination in *Nansō Satomi hakkenden* 南総里見八犬伝 has a Confucian core. As already noted, Bakin’s fiction was widely read in Shōyō’s time, in movable type editions. For example, Masaoka Shiki recalled having obtained a copy of Kōda Rohan’s *Fūryūbutsu* 風流仏 because everyone was praising it to the skies, only to find that at first he could not make out a word of it. Rohan had written *Fūryūbutsu* in the style of Saikaku’s domestic stories (*sewamono* 世話物), and Shiki, accustomed as he was to the seven-five-seven rhythm of Bakin, found his style so different as to be unintelligible.¹⁹

Thus *Shōsetsu shinzui* wages war on two fronts: on the one hand against Fenollosa’s late nineteenth-century anti-realist, religious aesthetics, and on the other against the “encourage virtue and chastise vice” of Bakin’s fiction and of the contemporary political novels. What, then, is the aim of the novel as “art”?

At the end of his opening chapter, Shōyō quoted several passages from Kikuchi Dairoku’s 菊池大麓 (1855-1917) translation of the work he entitled *Shūji oyobi kabun* 修辭及華文. These discuss the high esteem accorded the art of prose in modern Europe and cite as a fundamental reason for it the liberation of prose from “lofty poetry” (*kōshō no shisō* 高尚の詩想) and the “musical rhythm” (*sessō* 節奏) of words, so that its realism now “puts the reader in intimate touch with the affective reality of human life.” After affirming the value of the novel for education in history as well, these passages conclude by stating that the goal of artistic prose is not “truth” (*ri* 理, or *shinri* 真理), but “that which appeals to the infinitely varied tastes of human beings.”²⁰ In other words, the value of realism lies in its ability to draw the reader into the world of the work and to make this world completely convincing.

On this basis the second chapter of *Shōsetsu shinzui* (“Shōsetsu no hieki” 小説の裨益) goes on to state that the novel has the effect of ennobling the reader, arousing the moral conscience, hence also of encouraging virtue and chastising vice. However, its object is to guide the reader toward “a subtle awareness of the aspiration to beauty,” i.e., toward “the noblest sentiments,”²¹ and thus this effect is never more than an indirect result of the novel’s principal aim. Therefore, *Shōsetsu shinzui* has always been treated as advocating a modern European conception of the novel, one that positions it as an art independent of politics and morality.

In a third chapter (“Kyakushoku no hōsoku” 脚色の法則), Shōyō held that the novel “proceeds from the author’s pure imagination,”²² thus insisting on its fundamentally imaginary, fictional nature. The traditional, basically Confucian notion of “bungaku” recognizes the value neither of the imagination nor of fictionality, and Shōyō’s view is therefore clearly derived from modern Europe. It is true, of course, that the Chinese *zhuānqí* 伝奇 tradition, however poorly regarded, had reached Japan as well, and that such early Meiji Western scholars as Taguchi Ukichi and Fukuchi Ōchi had not hesitated to place Bakin’s mighty *Hakkenden* beside other works of *gesaku* fiction favored by late Tokugawa townsmen as examples of Japanese “bungaku.” In all likelihood Shōyō often

19 Shiotani 1977, pp. 81-82.

20 Tsubouchi *Shōyō shū*, pp. 7-8.

21 Tsubouchi *Shōyō shū*, p. 23.

22 Tsubouchi *Shōyō shū*, p. 43.

brought up *Hakkenden* and discussed Bakin’s words not just because the work was widely read, but because he felt moved to reject this sort of judgment. Although Shōyō recognized imagination and fictionality as fundamental to the novel, he did not see imaginative creativity as a criterion for evaluating art. He held instead that “dramatic structure” was essential, precisely in order to control the unfettered ramblings of the imagination. Thus he stressed that the proper aim of the novel as art is the “beautifully subtle effect of moving the reader by conveying the truth of human feelings.” This is the core of Shōyō’s position on realism in the novel.

However, the proposition arising from Shōyō’s quotations of *Shūji oyobi kabun*, to the effect that the technique of realism has gradually become a valid method for inducing the reader to experience and take pleasure in “beautifully subtle feelings,” and Shōyō’s own contention that the goal must be to convey “the truth of human feelings” in order to “have the reader experience it,” are fundamentally different.²³

Shōyō wrote at the beginning of the chapter he entitled “Shōsetsu no shugan” 小説の主眼, “The key aim of the novel is human feelings (*ninjō* 人情); life and the way it is lived (*setai fūzoku* 世態風俗) follow.”²⁴ This famous pronouncement proposes as the main aim of the novel, first the depiction of human psychology and feelings, and, second, the realities of society and manners. However the passage continues as follows: “What is meant by *ninjō*? *Ninjō* refers to human desires [*jōyoku* 情欲]; it means the 108 passions (*hyakuhachi bonnō* 百八煩惱 [defined by Buddhism]).” Thus the *ninjō* of which Shōyō spoke are not a matter merely of psychology and feeling. They are in human life the “secret of karma” (*inga no himitsu* 因果の秘密);²⁵ they are none other than human desires.

In the Japan of that time, the term *jōyoku* referred to human instinctive desires in general. It was not until roughly 1897 that it came to be used, as it is today, specifically for sexual desire. That Shōyō founded his thinking on human instinctive desires in general suggests the influence of Spencer’s social evolution, which he had studied in his student days. As will become clear below, *Shōsetsu shinzui* applies the theory of evolution to art. However, Shōyō differed from Spencer in that he saw no connection between the unfettered play of “human desires” and the betterment of society. Moreover, as Uchida Roan noted in “Yamada Bimyō Taijin no shōsetsu,” it would still be some time until intellectuals concerned with foreign literature began talking about how the naturalism of Emile Zola boldly exposes the worst in human nature.

From where did Shōyō derive his position that “human desires” are fundamental to human psychology? One seems to hear in it the Tokugawa-period maxim, especially evident in *gesaku* fiction, to the effect that “When all is said and done, the world runs on love and money.” It is well known that before moving to Tokyo, Shōyō lived in Nagoya, where he enjoyed reading *kokkeibon* 滑稽本. His call for “real” description of life and manners can be said to resonate with such *kokkeibon* as Shikitei Sanba’s *Ukiyo-buro* 浮世風呂. This approach was clearly inherited by Kanagaki Robun 仮名垣魯文, who in *Bankoku kōkai seiyō dōchū hizakurige* 万国航海 西洋道

23 In “Tsubouchi Shōyō,” Wada Shigejirō compared the passages Shōyō quoted from *Shūji oyobi kabun* against the English original and observed that such “rhetorically elegant language” positively conveyed “encourage virtue and chastise vice” sentiments.

24 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 16.

25 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 16.

中膝栗毛 (1870-76, continued by Fusao Kan 総生寛 until 1877) borrowed and developed the framework of Jippensha Ikku's *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* 東海道中膝栗毛 in parodies of Fukuzawa Yukichi's *Seiyō tabi annai* 西洋旅案内 (1867) and *Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情 (1866-70). One might also cite Robun's *Agura nabe* 安愚楽鍋 (1871-72), which evokes down-to-earth curiosity about new, Western ways in the setting of an early Meiji Tokyo beef stew shop. Beneath repeated, hilarious word play, the work betrays a deeper concern with the reality of "human desires" and of "life and manners."²⁶ Read in conjunction with *Tōsei shosei katagi*, which presents satirical portraits of the students of 1881-82, the message of *Shōsetsu shinzui* seems a natural extension of the style of Kanagaki Robun.

However, the voice most immediately audible in Shōyō's discussion of human desires (*ninjō*) in *Shōsetsu shinzui* is that neither of late-Tokugawa *kokkeibon* nor of Kanagaki Robun. It is that of Motoori Norinaga. Indeed, Shōyō placed a long quotation from Norinaga's *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* (1796) at the end of his "Shōsetsu no shugan" chapter. Norinaga criticized the Confucianism that governed learning in Tokugawa times for fettering poetry (*shi* 詩) with reason (*dōri* 道理) and for preventing expression of "human desires [or feelings, *ninjō*] just as they are," or "human desires in their natural state." He held that the fundamental significance of Japanese poetry (*waka*) and classical fiction (*monogatari*) lies in conveying *mono no aware* 物の哀れ to the reader by evoking immoral love as the very height of *ninjō*. The logic of Shōyō's argument concerning the indirect effect of the novel speaks not of reason but of conveying *mono no aware*, in which respect it is close to Norinaga's contention that *mono no aware* arouses the moral conscience. Moreover, Shōyō's warning in his "Kyakushoku no hōsoku" chapter that the writer needs a dramatic structure capable of curbing the unfettered imagination, in order to achieve "the marvelous effect of conveying to the reader the truth of the feelings described," resembles Norinaga's contention that in order to show "human feelings [or desires] just as they are," one must resort, as an expedient, to the technique of a mode of expression that looks back to ancient times.²⁷

6.2.2 The Concept of "Bungaku" in *Shōsetsu shinzui*

As it has often been remarked, *Shōsetsu shinzui* represents in a sense a revival of Norinaga's ideas. Shōyō attempted to define evoking *ninjō* in their natural state—the foundation of Norinaga's thesis regarding the *monogatari*—as the essence of the novel. He had read a good deal of Western fiction, under the influence of friends encountered while he was studying politics and economics in the Faculty of Letters of Tokyo University, but it may also be worth recalling that the Department of Chinese and Japanese Classics was inaugurated in the same Faculty, on

26 Ochi 1975, pp. 20-29.

27 Both Hisamatsu Sen'ichi 久松潜一 ("Tsubouchi Shōyō no bungaku hyōron" 坪内逍遥の文学評論) and Seki Ryōichi ("Shōsetsu shinzui to senkō bunken" 『小説神髓』と先行文献) observed that what Shōyō quoted from Motoori Norinaga's *Tama no ogushi* 玉小の櫛 does not discuss *shajitsu shugi* 写実主義 (depiction of reality), and they concluded that Shōyō did not really understand Norinaga's idea of *mono no aware*, however, judging from his only superficially informed quotations from Fenollosa's "Bijutsu shinsetsu" and from *Shūji oyobi kabun*, Shōyō seems to have understood Norinaga's *mono no aware* relatively well.

the initiative of Katō Hiroyuki, at just the same time.

Why, then, did Shōyō address not waka or monogatari, but the novel? “As culture develops,” he wrote, “and human knowledge advances by degrees, *ninjō* cannot help changing and becoming somewhat more complex.”²⁸ Poetry, limited in length and concerned with rhythm or rhyme, cannot give such *ninjō* full expression. Moreover, since human behavior changes together with shifts in manners and modes of life, “Manners and ways of living as portrayed on the stage by kabuki actors are out of date and lack authenticity.”²⁹ Having thus cited the shortcomings of poetry and drama, Shōyō went on to write that, unlike them, the novel “appeals directly to the reader’s heart and draws the reader into its imaginary world.” Therefore it does not suffer from the limitations that affect poetry and drama; instead, “it conveys the manners of each age in broad perspective and in detail, and arouses no dissatisfaction in the reader.”³⁰ For that reason, its greatest advantage is that it is suited to the present. “No doubt it enjoys its now honored position,” he concluded, invoking the theory of evolution, “thanks to the irresistible force of natural selection.”³¹

In sum, *Shōsetsu shinzui* borrows from the modern West the idea that the novel is a form of art; applies to it Motoori Norinaga’s thesis that its proper aim is to convey human feelings and the desires that underlie them; and attempts to ground the popularity of the realist novel in the modern West, with its depiction of “manners and modes of life,” in a Spencerian view of evolution. Perhaps Shōyō also sought to integrate the Japanism of Norinaga, who rejected the Confucian concept of truth (*kotowari* 理), with the modern Western conception of art. Norinaga’s valorization of “human feelings/desires just as they are,” and his vision of ancient Japan as a world in which those feelings were all in harmony, resembles the romantic nationalism of modern Western Europe. However, Shōyō’s thinking, based as it is on evolutionary theory, is not compatible with this approach. Moreover, the notion that imagination and fictionality are expedient devices (*hōben* 方便) accords ill with the modern Western view of art, which places high value on both. Shōyō removed the key idea from Norinaga’s thesis; conflated “human feelings/desires just as they are” and Western realist technique; merged the result with realistic evocation of feelings/desires, manners, and modes of life; and elevated these incompatibilities into what one might call an ideal. In that sense, he could be said to uphold a sort of hyperrealism that makes the technique of realism its highest ideal.

In championing the modern, realistic novel over poetry and drama, *Shōsetsu shinzui* plainly treats all three as belonging to the same category, that of linguistic art. Tsubouchi Shōyō’s criticism of Fenollosa’s aesthetics involves a disagreement over the role of art, and his critique of late-Tokugawa *gesaku* fiction belongs to a debate over what linguistic art should be. However, no term embracing all these appears anywhere in the work.

In all of *Shōsetsu shinzui* the term “bungaku” appears only once, in the “Shōsetsu no hieki”

28 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 6.

29 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, pp. 13-14.

30 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 15.

31 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 15. Tokutomi Roka noted in his *Omoide no ki* that Darwin lectured at Kansai Gakuin 関西学院 in 1886, and it is well known that in about 1887 Futabatei Shimei read his *Theory of Evolution* in English. In “Wagōyaku” 和合薬 (1890), Kōda Rohan described “a striking figure who, having absorbed Western learning, glared at everyone through his eyeglasses and who, with his face set in an expression that seemed to claim kinship with Darwin, all but advertised himself as a friend of Huxley” ([Kōda]Rohan *zenshū*, vol. 1, p. 184).

chapter, in the expression, “the matter of becoming a model of *bungaku*” (*bungaku no shihyō to naru koto* 文学の師表となる事).³² The passage compares the style of intellectual argument (*ronbun* 論文), the reporting style (*kiji no bun* 記事の文), historical style (*rekishibun* 歴史文), and dialogue style (*mondō bun* 問答文), then goes on to declare that the style of the novel, which requires all this diversity, deserves to be called the style of styles (*bunshōchū no bunshō* 文章中の文章).³³ By “*bungaku*” he can therefore be said to have meant stylistic technique. In reminiscences written after the beginning of the Shōwa era (1926), Shōyō still referred to the Department of English Literature (Eibungakuka) or Japanese Literature (Kokubungakuka) as a *junbunka* 純文科 (department of pure literature); but for those just then starting out on their careers, the word “*bungaku*” referred above all to a category embracing both humanistic learning in general and the linguistic arts. If used in a more restricted sense, the term tended to carry the meaning of stylistic technique.

With respect to the different novelistic genres, in the “*Buntai ron*” 文体論 section of *Shōsetsu shinzui*, Shōyō calls works on contemporary themes *sewa monogatari* 世話物語 and those on historical themes *jidai monogatari* 時代物語. These terms are clearly derived from the *sewamono* 世話物 and *jidaimono* 時代物 genres of kabuki.³⁴ In the “*Jidai shōsetsu no kyakushoku*” 時代小説の脚色 section, *jidai monogatari* are called *jidai shōsetsu* or *rekishi shōsetsu* 歴史小説.³⁵ Shōyō’s essential position on the *jidai shōsetsu* is that it should recreate the reality of the period in question and present the other side of its formal history, in other words, that it should demonstrate an interest in historical accuracy. In his discussion of dramatic structure he proposes that in the case of the novel, “tragedy” should be translated as *hiai shōsetsu* 悲哀小説, “comedy” as *kaikatsu shōsetsu* 快活小説, and “tragicomedy” as *aikan shōsetsu* 哀歡小説.³⁶ These translations do not seem to have become accepted.

Shōyō’s theory that the modern novel is superior to poetry and drama, and that realism is the first principle of the novel, naturally involved as well a conception of hierarchy among the linguistic arts, and within the novel itself. In “*Miraiki ni rui-suru shōsetsu* (Part 1)” 未来記に類する小説(第一) (1887), Shōyō acknowledged the popularity of Jules Verne’s (1828-1905) *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1873) and recognized the work as a “prophetic masterpiece” (*miraimono no kessaku* 未来物の傑作), but nonetheless assumed a dismissive attitude toward it, describing it as “anomalous” and “blind to art.”³⁷ Shōyō’s ideas during this period show the beginnings of a distinction between “normal” and “anomalous” in the novel, that is, of a way of thinking about the novel that involves systematic distinctions.

Several such works by Verne were translated into Japanese not that long after their original

32 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 27.

33 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 28.

34 In 1896 Tsubouchi Shōyō, who had moved on to work at the “improvement of the theater,” published from Hakubunkan a play evoking the heyday of Toyotomi Hideyoshi and entitled *Kiri hitoha* 桐一葉. This work was advertised in the inaugural issue of *Bunshō kurabu* 文章倶楽部 as a *jidai shōsetsu*.

35 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, p. 51.

36 Tsubouchi Shōyō *shū*, pp. 44-45.

37 Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōsetsu shinzui* (Iwanami Shoten, 1936), pp. 256-57.

publication and enjoyed enormous popularity as “marvelous evocations of technology” that taught “the great principles of Western science.”³⁸ They included Kawashima Chūnosuke’s 川島忠之助 rendering of *Le Tour du monde* (1878-80), Taihei Sanji’s 太平三次の *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers* (1884-85), and the collaborative translation of *Voyage au centre de la terre* by Miki Aika 三木愛花 and Takasu Bokuho 高須墨浦 (1885).

6.2.3 Some Reactions

Some may well believe that *Shōsetsu shinzui* (with the help of the first part of Futabatei Shimei’s *Ukigumo*, originally published in 1887 under Shōyō’s name) was immediately canonized by young people newly interested in literature. Uchida Roan was undoubtedly correct when he wrote, “It was Harunoya’s [Shōyō’s] success that inspired Bimyō and Kōyō to make literature their life.” As others have pointed out, the same success encouraged the introduction of realist techniques into the political novel as well, for example, Suehiro Tetchō’s *Setchūbai*.³⁹ *Shōsetsu shinzui* aroused considerable interest among aspiring writers and undoubtedly played a major role, but contemporary reactions to it are not that easy to find. The fact of the matter is that it met with only a muted response. No doubt that is because the prevailing view at the time saw no connection between fiction and higher values, but it is also important to acknowledge that the work provoked a degree of backlash.

First, there seems to have been a generally cold reaction from the old-fashioned fiction writers who serialized their work in the “minor” newspapers. In *Watakushi no mita Meiji bundan* 私の見た明治文壇, Nozaki Sabun 野崎左文 recalled Kanagaki Robun’s reaction to *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Robun held that “the Japanese novel needs above all a good plot, and its chief aim is to give the reader pleasure.” This position, Robun wrote, therefore led him to reject *Shōsetsu shinzui* on the grounds that it urged writers simply to photograph their characters, and that however accurate such photographs might be, they could never be as pleasing to look at as a *nishiki-e* 錦絵 (woodblock print) picture.⁴⁰

A surviving anecdote tells how Futabatei Shimei visited Tsubouchi Shōyō in January 1886, carrying a copy of *Shōsetsu shinzui* with bookmarks in it at the places Shimei had questions about. The crux of Shimei’s objections seems to have been the absence from *Shōsetsu shinzui* of any “idea” アイデア (basic conception, intention). Shimei, a diligent student, was well read in foreign, especially Russian fiction and literary theory. At the time he was particularly keen on the literary criticism of Vissarion Grigorievich Belinskii (1811-1848), whose views, although related to German idealism, emphasized intellectual and social content. It was no doubt obvious to him that *Shōsetsu shinzui* discussed no more than method or technique. Later on, Shōyō described how during his time at Tokyo Imperial University he studied foreign literary criticism and English literary history and went on:

Those were the days when I picked up from my reading the materials from which I

38 Quoted by Ochi Haruo, *Kindai bungaku no tanjō*, p. 142.

39 Ochi 1975, p. 127. Ochi Haruo also pointed out the kinship between *ninjōbon* and *shajitsusei*.

40 Usui 1980, vol. 1, p. 38.

eventually made up *Shōsetsu shinzui*. I had given the work some sort of organization, but I had collected what went into it at random, from hither and yon, so that when later on Futabatei [Shimei] tried to get at its basis, I was obliged to reply that it had none. Such was the tenuous foundation on which I had constructed my theory of the novel.⁴¹

This reminiscence sounds entirely plausible. It is surely true that in the late 1870s or early 1880s Shōyō's head was full of the ambition to reform fiction, whether political novel or *gesaku*, and to elevate it to the level of exalted linguistic art. Ever since passing his entrance exams and moving to Tokyo in 1876, he had been nursing the idea of writing an amusing book based on tales of student failures, which he then fleshed out with experiences from his own student days.⁴² In 1883 Shōyō began publishing "Shōsetsu buntai no kenkyū" 小説文体の研究 (A Study of Novelistic Style) in *Meiji Kyōkai zasshi* 明治協会雑誌, and it is probably then, in the heyday of the political novel, that he resolved to begin serious work on *Tōsei shosei katagi*. If so, then the main thrust of *Shōsetsu shinzui* might be said to lie in its second half, with its treatment of style and structure, while the first, with its idiosyncratic idealization of modern European realist technique, constitutes a sort of exordium.

Furthermore, there must have been other young men beside Futabatei Shimei who disagreed with *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Surely Kōda Rohan, for example, was among them. Rohan set about tracing a path for the improvement of the novel on the basis of his reading in the Chinese classics and in Buddhist texts, and of his particular fondness for Saikaku. The result was, for example, the strange story he told in *Fūryūbutsu*, in which a Buddhist sculptor, desperately in love with a peasant girl he met in a mountain village of the Kiso region, carves a buddha image that finally turns into a nude statue of his beloved. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that this work is akin to many belonging to a certain vein of nineteenth-century European romanticism. Rohan had the following to say on the subject.

The thirteen post stations of Kiso are very pretty places, you know. The flower pickles of Suhara station are famous, too, and the place is so nice, I used one of the flower-seller girls there. The rest is just my imagination. I became absorbed in writing the book almost as though I had been writing up what I'd seen and heard around there as a sort of travelogue.⁴³

This passage evokes a picture of Rohan with a look on his face as much as to say, "*Shōsetsu shinzui* never had anything to do with me!"

With its complaint that "Manners and ways of living as portrayed on the stage by kabuki actors are out of date and lack authenticity," *Shōsetsu shinzui* attacked traditional kabuki acting. Also in 1886, however, Toyama Masakazu 外山正一 published *Engeki kairyō ron shikō* 演劇改良論私考, and Suematsu Kenchō published *Engeki kairyō iken* 演劇改良意見. Just a few years

41 Usui 1980, vol. 1, p. 85.

42 Ochi 1975, pp. 142-45.

43 Masamune et al. 1961, p. 49.

later, Fukuchi Ōchi introduced realism into the script and performance of kabuki *jidaimono* 時代物 (“period plays”), gaining enormous success with a new type of play, known as *katsureki* 活歴 (“living theater”). This, too, can perhaps be called a reaction to *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Then Tsubouchi Shōyō himself set out to improve the theater and ventured into staging Shakespearean plays.

However, there is no room in this book to pursue the topic of the improvement of the theater, including the founding of the *shinpa* 新派 (“new [theater] style”) movement by Kawakami Otojirō. Indeed, despite *Shōsetsu shinzui* upholding the realistic novel as the proper form for elevated linguistic art, and despite the establishment of departments of English and German literature at Tokyo Imperial University, the stormy debate over the concept of “bungaku” continued as before. In fact, the late 1880s and early 1890s can be described as a period of struggle over this concept, since during this time the questions of what “bungaku” is, and what it should be, were raised with increasing urgency. The direction indicated by *Shōsetsu shinzui* was suddenly put to a severe test.