

Introduction

Shōsetsu shinzui as the Ideological Origin of Modern Japanese Literature

No discussion of modern Japanese literary development is complete without references to Tsubouchi Shōyō's (1859–1935) *Shōsetsu shinzui* (*The Essence of the Novel*, 1885–86), which has consistently been designated as the origin of modern Japanese literature. Although literary historians have offered varying interpretations of *Shōsetsu shinzui* throughout the years, the rhetoric of “development” and “progress” that situates *Shōsetsu shinzui* at the originary point of modern literary reform and Shōyō as the founder of modern Japanese literature is ubiquitous.

This seminal text is one of the first comprehensive theories to be written on the *shōsetsu*.¹ As Kamei Hideo's “*Shōsetsu*”ron, a brilliant recent study of *Shōsetsu shinzui* has shown, much of *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s theoretical endeavors were on a par with, if not more advanced than, its Euro-American counterparts.² *Shōsetsu shinzui* is composed of two volumes, the first of which consists of six sections: “Shogen” (Introduction), “Shōsetsu sōron” (The Comprehensive Theory of the *Shōsetsu*), “Shōsetsu no hensen” (The Vicissitudes of the *Shōsetsu*), “Shōsetsu no shugan” (The Main Themes of the *Shōsetsu*), “Shōsetsu no shurui” (The Types of *Shōsetsu*), and “Shōsetsu no hieki” (The Benefits of the *Shōsetsu*). The second volume, which focuses on the methodological aspects of writing the *shōsetsu*, includes “Shōsetsu hōsoku sōron” (The Comprehensive Rules of the *Shōsetsu*), “Buntairon” (The Theory of Style), “Shōsetsu

kyakushoku no hōsoku” (Principles of Construction in the *Shōsetsu*), “Jidai shōsetsu no kyakushoku” (The Configuration of the Historical *Shōsetsu*), “Shujinkō no setchi” (Configuring the Protagonist), and “Jōjihō” (The Methods of Description). Just by the title of these sections, we can see the multiple perspectives from which *Shōsetsu shinzui* sought to theorize the *shōsetsu*.

Despite its multidimensionality, references to this seminal text are limited primarily to the first volume, and more narrowly to “The Main Themes of the *Shōsetsu*.” Perhaps the most-often-quoted passage of *Shōsetsu shinzui* is the following from “The Main Themes of the *Shōsetsu*”:

A writer is like a psychologist. He must create his characters based on the principles of psychology. If he creates, by his own design, characters who deviate from human emotions (*ninjō*) or, worse, from the principles of psychology, those characters would merely be figments of the writer’s imagination rather than those belonging to the human world. . . . The writer should therefore focus his talents on human psychology. Although the characters may be his own creation, he must not design them based on his ideas of good and bad or right and wrong. Instead, he must simply observe (*bōkan*) and depict (*mosha*) them as they are (*ari no mama*).³

It is not an exaggeration to say that this passage canonized *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the origin of modern Japanese literature. The focus on the apparent call for psychological realism, a *shōsetsu* that realistically portrays emotions (*ninjō*) and customs and manners (*fūzoku setai*), dominates the study of *Shōsetsu shinzui*, whereas discussions on the vicissitudes and benefits of the *shōsetsu*, not to mention the entire second volume, which theorizes the practice of writing a *shōsetsu*, are too often overlooked. Such a focalized, and as we shall see shortly, highly ideological view of *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the origin of modern Japanese literature can be traced back to the turn of the century.⁴ Takayama Chogyū, for example, in his famous “Meiji no shōsetsu” (The *Shōsetsu* of Meiji, 1897) espouses Shōyō’s position in the following manner:

When Shōyō entered the scene, publishing *Shōsetsu shinzui* and *Tōsei shosei katagi* [*The Character of Modern Students*, 1885–86], he exposed the fallacy of didacticism (*kanzen chōaku*) and opened the path toward realistic *shōsetsu* (*shajitsushō setsu*);⁵ everyone then began to pursue it, completely altering the literary attitude.⁶

Such narrative became even more dramatic with the advent of naturalism and the emergence of psychological realism as the primary theme of the *shōsetsu*.

Consider, for example, the following passage from Ikuta Chōkō's *Meiji jidai bunpan* (*A Guide to Meiji Letters*, 1907):

Shōsetsu shinzui is truly a revolutionary (*kakumeiji*) of the world of the *shōsetsu*. The loud cry of this revolution—the loud cry that attempted to introduce a brand-new trend to our nation's literary world—woke up even the lifeless, old-fashioned writers of the time. The imprudent didacticism was defeated in the eyes of the public, and realism (*shajitsu*) was valued. Portraying the psychology (*shinri*) with emotions (*ninjō*) as the main aim of the *shōsetsu* became the general trend.⁷

Marking a transition from “old-fashioned” didacticism to psychological realism, *Shōsetsu shinzui* thus signified a break from “premodern” literary practices. Once such a narrative was established, *Shōsetsu shinzui* began to embody the criteria by which the *shōsetsu* was evaluated. It became a filter through which literary historians defined “premodern” and “modern” works. This narrative was reproduced throughout the twentieth century, and in different shape or form, *Shōsetsu shinzui* has since been an ideological site where modern Japanese literature was founded.⁸ This is not to say, however, that there have been no scholars who questioned *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s status. Works by literary critics Maeda Ai and Kamei Hideo have, as early as the 1960s, questioned this sudden turn toward “the modern.”⁹ Asukai Masamichi, too, questioned the originary status of *Shōsetsu shinzui* and instead designated political *shōsetsu* as “the beginning of modern literature.”¹⁰ Peter Kornicki was similarly critical of *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s position as origin in his book, *Reform of Fiction in Meiji Japan*, where he discussed the varying forms of “reform” in the 1880s, highlighting the fact that Shōyō was by no means the first or the only critic to call for “literary reform.” Yet for a long time these exceptions stood side by side with the many other narratives of literary histories that reinforced *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s ideological status. We have seen increasing efforts, especially in the 1990s and beyond, to critically examine the shifting categories of *shōsetsu* and *bungaku* (now a standard translation of “literature”), thereby questioning the basic assumptions of literary history that lie at the core of *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s status as the origin of modern Japanese literature: some such examples in addition to Kamei Hideo's “*Shōsetsu*”*ron* mentioned earlier are Fujii Sadakazu, *Nihon “shōsetsu” genshi* (*The Primal Origins of the Japanese Shōsetsu*, 1995); Noguchi Takeshiko, *Shōsetsu* (1996); and Suzuki Sadami, *Nihon no “bungaku” gainen* (*The Concept of “Literature” in Japan*, 1998).¹¹ These studies have given us means to question the ideological narrative that envelops *Shōsetsu shinzui*, to which this book is greatly indebted, but the fact remains that no

other literary treatise has been as ideologically charged as *Shōsetsu shinzui*, as it was continually selected as a site of “literary modernity” that forms the institution of modern Japanese literature.

Interestingly, however, when we turn our attention to 1880s Japan, we find that *Shōsetsu shinzui* was not recognized by the literati immediately upon its publication nor did it gain its seminal status until later. Kōda Rohan (1867–1947) recounts in his “Meiji nijūnen zengo no nibunsei” (Two Literary Stars of the Late 1880s, 1925) that *Shōsetsu shinzui* neither moved many readers nor managed to garner a substantial response upon publication.¹² Peter Kornicki claims that he found “few trifling mentions” of *Shōsetsu shinzui* in the six years after its publication.¹³ In fact, Shōyō’s experimental fictional work, *Tōsei shosei katagi*, a text now considered to be a literary failure, was received with more immediate approval than *Shōsetsu shinzui*.

This initial obscurity is thought provoking in light of the repeated appearance of what literary critic Nakayama Akihiko calls the *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés used in discussions of the *shōsetsu* around the time *Shōsetsu shinzui* was published.¹⁴ By *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés, I follow Nakayama’s usage and refer to terms such as *ninjō*, *fūzoku*, and *setai* (emotions, customs, and manners) and *mosha* used to discuss the realm of the *shōsetsu* even when neither Shōyō nor *Shōsetsu shinzui* is directly mentioned.¹⁵ Such clichés are called *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés because they were retrospectively associated with *Shōsetsu shinzui*, but they began to be used in the early to mid-1880s independently of *Shōsetsu shinzui*. As early as 1881 and 1882, we see writers associating *shōsetsu* with “emotions” and “customs”: Hattori Bushō (1842–1908) refers to emotions and customs as the main topic of *shōsetsu*; Nakajima Katsuyoshi (1858–1932) defines *shōsetsu*’s aim as the portrayal of emotions and customs.¹⁶ Sakazaki Shiran’s (1853–1913) “Shōsetsu haishi no honbun o ronzu” (On the Primary Role of *Shōsetsu Haishi*, 1885), published prior to *Shōsetsu shinzui*, also states, “What is *shōsetsu* after all? It is a medium that describes manners and emotions, and it is possible to call it a mirror of truthful depiction.”¹⁷ Such usages continue in the “debates on the decline of literature” (*bungaku kyokusui ronsō*) that occurred between 1889 and 1890, as the critics involved argue over whether the portrayal of emotions in *shōsetsu* is causing the deterioration of literature. In criticizing the contemporary *shōsetsu*, the writer of “Bungaku sekai no kinkyō” (Current Conditions of the World of Letters, 1890) states, “Writers of *shōsetsu* describe ‘base emotions’ and not ‘correct emotions.’”¹⁸ Uchida Roan (1868–1929), in response to such claims, asserts that “love is part of seven basic emotions, and it is not possible to portray ‘emotions’ without it,” using phrases like “penetrate the depths of emotions” (*ninjō o*

ugatsu) in the process.¹⁹ Explicitly or implicitly, whether for or against it, these critics refer to “emotions, customs, and manners” in their discussions as if there is a naturalized association between such terms and the *shōsetsu*, which shows that there was a shift in literature that revolved around these terms.

In unraveling this shift in literature, “emotions, customs, and manners” must be putatively separated from *Shōsetsu shinzui* because *Shōsetsu shinzui* was merely one of the many texts that associated these terms with the *shōsetsu*, not the cause of the shift. Only retrospectively was *Shōsetsu shinzui* identified as the sole initiator of the shift to “emotions, customs, and manners.” Positing *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the origin of the shift was thus not a descriptive act but an ideological one. With this act, *Shōsetsu shinzui* took on the role of the ideological origin of “literature.” The designation “*Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés” manifests the uncritical association between *Shōsetsu shinzui* and “emotions, customs, and manners,” which is at the core of the mechanism that supports and reinforces the ideological status of *Shōsetsu shinzui*. Despite the risk of misunderstanding, I chose to retain the designation as a constant reminder of this mechanism.

By methodologically separating “emotions, customs, and manners” from *Shōsetsu shinzui* and recasting them in the political and intellectual landscape of 1880s Japan, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment* highlights the moment when an epistemological shift occurred in the understanding of “literature,” the moment that literature came into being as an ontologically independent category. When the *shōsetsu* found its *raison d’être* in “emotions, customs, and manners,” it paved the way toward establishing the equation “*bungaku* = literature,” an equation that was, as I will show shortly, yet to be established in the mid-1880s.

What then did “emotions, customs, and manners” constitute? It goes without saying that increased focalization on one theme cannot occur without simultaneous defocalization of another theme in the textual realm of representation. This book argues that the establishment of emotions, customs, and manners as the main theme of the *shōsetsu* is inextricably linked to the defocalization of “political” discourse. In the mid-1880s, emotions, customs, and manners appeared in direct opposition to a certain habitus that constituted the “political” at that particular historical juncture.²⁰

Needless to say, texts and narratives that we now categorize under the rubric of literature were written long before this time. However, literature as category had yet to gain recognition, and at this particular historical moment, it did so by defining itself against the political. For literature to gain an independent identity, this political—posited in opposition to literature—had to be *produced*

as an object to be repressed. In other words, the production of “*bungaku* = literature” occurred with the production *and* the repression of the political. Despite the repression of the political, however, “*bungaku* = literature” is far from apolitical; it embodies a new kind of politics that is manifested in the concealment of politics.

Many politically oriented works continued to flourish, but once “literature” was established, those works became part of a *literary* genre. The rubric *seiji shōsetsu* is often used to categorize the politically oriented texts that proliferated in the 1880s. I will refer to many such works in the body of this book, but I deliberately refrain from using this rubric based on my contention that *seiji shōsetsu* had yet to become a genre at this historical juncture.²¹ This is crucial for my endeavor precisely because *seiji shōsetsu* is a *literary* genre that comes into being along with “literature.”

To elaborate on the methodology by which I examine this epistemological shift, I will delineate the multiple significance of *Shōsetsu shinzui* in my project. First and foremost, *Shōsetsu shinzui* is one of the many texts that featured the association between emotions, customs, and manners and the *shōsetsu*. *Shōsetsu shinzui* textually expresses the shift, sharing the space with the appearance of the clichés in the 1880s to early 1890s. Accordingly, in reading *Shōsetsu shinzui*, I closely analyze the textual positioning of key terms, focusing specifically on what subsequently became *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés, in order to decipher the shift they embody. I not only offer a close reading of this text but examine how the terms interact with various discourses that constitute it. In this respect, this book is not a simple “historicization” or “contextualization” of *shōsetsu* and “literature,” which assumes a one-dimensional relationship between text and context. This project is predicated on the idea that absence is inscribed in the presence; that is to say, what appears on the textual surface shares its semantic economy with what is left out of the text, hence invalidating the artificial boundaries often instituted between text and context. Reading the semantic economy of *Shōsetsu shinzui* means reading the semantic distribution that composes the very economy. I thus pay particular attention to the linguistic positioning of *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés within this economy.

Shōsetsu shinzui is also an embodiment of the ideological category of literature. This raises an important methodological issue. Precisely because of the originary status ascribed to *Shōsetsu shinzui*, the boundary of literature can be deciphered by strategically treating *Shōsetsu shinzui* as a textual filter that includes as well as excludes certain writings in and from its discussion. In this respect, I am unraveling the ideological frame that is projected onto *Shōsetsu*

shinzui. However, I recognize the logical inversion inscribed in this methodology. I treat *Shōsetsu shinzui* as a textual filter in order to derive the boundary of literature, but this should not be taken to mean that *Shōsetsu shinzui* prompted the production of literature. In fact, I argue against the idea that *Shōsetsu shinzui* effected the paradigm shift that brought ontological independence to the category of literature. So I am not arguing that the filter of *Shōsetsu shinzui* did establish the boundaries of literature. I am arguing that the exclusions *Shōsetsu shinzui* inscribes are crucial because those boundaries are what later scholars reinforced when they adopted *Shōsetsu shinzui* as an origin.

Not only is it historically flawed to claim that *Shōsetsu shinzui* initiated such change but it is theoretically invalid to say so. No single text can exert power upon the field of discourse to produce an epistemological shift. Modern Japanese literary history has overemphasized the role of *Shōsetsu shinzui* in narrativizing the development of modern Japanese literature. Accordingly, I seek to identify the varying discursive forces that, coincidentally or otherwise, facilitated the production of literature and ultimately endorsed the repression of politics and hence the ideological category itself. Because an epistemological shift cannot happen as the result of one text, we can understand the shift only by examining the larger discursive environment in which that shift took place. In this sense, the notion of linguistic economy is still quite restrictive in theme and in space; it narrows the discursive radar to what a given text—in all its presence and absence—engages, and as a result, does not do justice to the multiple levels of discourse that are set in motion when an epistemological shift occurs.²² I have thus sought to locate parallel discursive movements that facilitate the paradigm shift central to my argument. This study extends itself to discursive realms that may, at first glance, appear wholly unconnected with the production of the *shōsetsu*, such as radical political activism that manifests in the many violent riots that occurred in the 1880s, the redefinition of “knowledge” (*gakumon*), educational reforms in the Meiji era, and the newly emergent geographical awareness. But such inquiries provide access to the forces that one way or another endorse the production of literature as an ontologically independent entity.

Finally, I examine *Shōsetsu shinzui* as a central site of the politics of concealment that has governed the institution of modern Japanese literature. As we will see in detail in Chapter 6, repeated designation of *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the origin of modern Japanese literature dissociated *Shōsetsu shinzui* from the specific condition in which it emerged. As literary histories of the later years overemphasized the role of *Shōsetsu shinzui* as the beginning of modern liter-

ary practices—based on the uncritical association between “emotions, customs, and manners” and *Shōsetsu shinzui*—they took for granted the existence of “literature” that had yet to take form in the 1880s. Naturally, an easy acceptance of *Shōsetsu shinzui*’s originary status also concealed the process through which literature came into being: through the concealment of politics. *Shōsetsu shinzui*, as ideological origin, thus embodies a double concealment. I seek to unravel the mechanism of this double concealment and challenge the very foundation of modern Japanese literary culture.

These multiple approaches to *Shōsetsu shinzui* are crucial to my effort to identify the epistemological shift and the effects it has on varying practices of “literature.” As can be predicted, however, divisions between these realms are often not clear. These realms of inquiry thus appear in all of the chapters, sometimes feeding off one another and at other times producing friction with one another. Despite the apparent confusion such methodology may cause, I believe the differing yet interrelated realms of inquiry are crucial to the endeavor that constitutes this book.

The rest of the chapter is a prelude to the discussions that follow. To effectively highlight the processes through which literature gained ontological independence, I wish to first briefly discuss the categories of *bungaku* and *shōsetsu* and how they were mobilized among the literati of the time. I then inquire into the realm of “modern knowledge” and discuss the many contingencies with which the production of the *shōsetsu* engages, all the while demonstrating the power dynamics that govern the formation of modern knowledge. Finally, I examine the newly emergent geographical awareness and the ideological paradigm upon which it is founded. These discussions map out the important discursive tendencies that ultimately facilitated the production of the *shōsetsu*.

Bungaku ≠ Literature and Shōsetsu ≠ Novel

Prior to its coupling with literature, the term *bungaku* denoted “study” or “knowledge,” and it primarily referred to writings of the *kangaku* classics.²³ Yet this should not be conflated with what we refer to as “scholarship” today. Until the Edo period, the definition of *bungaku* was “the study of *bun*”—a character that etymologically means “figure or pattern”—which meant “the reign of the country through means other than direct verbal orders and ordinances.”²⁴ *Bungaku* referred not only to a paradigm of knowledge that had to be studied but also to the ideological forces that shaped the ordering system that was “lived” by people. Even in Meiji Japan, such a definition of *bungaku* remained. Nishi

Amane (1829–97), for example, says in the opening passage of *Hyakugaku renkan* (*Encyclopedia*, 1870): “*Bun* and ‘the way’ are two things that grew out of one; when *bungaku* flourishes, the way is bright. . . . If the *bun* does not flourish, then ‘the way’ will never be illuminated.”²⁵ *Bungaku*, in other words, involved a definite moral element; it was a study of the “right” and “good” paths embodied by the *kangaku* classics.

These texts consisted of works such as *Chunqiu* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*), *Guoyu* (*Chronicles of States*), *Shiji* (*Records of the Grand Historian*), and *Hanshu* (*Book of Han*).²⁶ These are chronicles of the rise and fall of empires, histories of warfare, and the accomplishments and failures of leaders. In short, these classics were narratives about basic strategies of war, as well as the indispensable methods for building and ruling a nation. As such, politics, history, and literature were inextricably connected in the realm of *bungaku*, and this was a familiar framework for the members of the Meiji intelligentsia.²⁷

The Sinitic Japanese compound *shōsetsu*, too, belonged to this discursive framework and had an entirely different signified compared to its current meaning.²⁸ Although *shōsetsu* were not regarded as highly as the official histories that constituted knowledge, the interrelatedness of politics, history, and literature was very much a part of this body of writing. *Shōsetsu* initially referred to writings by the low-ranking officials of the Chinese government who compiled information they gathered from the commoners. A dictionary entry usually quotes the following passage from *Hanshu*, one of the *kangaku* classics: “*Shōsetsu* writers and officials collected gossip from the local area by listening to rumors on the streets.”²⁹ *Shōsetsu* was thus a collection of the “small talk” that derived from events occurring in the local community. In sharp contrast to the texts included in “official history” (*seishi*), *shōsetsu* referred to writings that had minimal importance. Accordingly, the term *shōsetsu* was often used by writers to diminish their own works.³⁰

The meaning of *shōsetsu* began to change in the Edo period as *hakuwa shōsetsu* (Chinese vernacular fiction; *baihua xiaoshuo* in Chinese) started to be imported from China.³¹ A form of narrative written in the vernacular style, this group of texts is said to have begun in the Sung dynasty (960–1279). In the Edo period, works such as *Sanguozhi yanyi* (*The Epoch of the Three Kingdoms*) and *Shuihu zhuan* (*The Water Margin*) became extremely popular; and adaptations of such narratives were produced by many *gesaku* writers, such as Kyokutei Bakin.³² With the introduction of such narratives designated “*shōsetsu*,” *shōsetsu* began to take on the meaning of fiction and was no longer simply limited to mere rumors and the “small talk” of commoners. However, even in the Edo period,

shōsetsu did not signify a prescribed genre, and it retained the broad meaning “trivial writings” or “not-so-serious text.”

The term *shōsetsu* was applied in various ways in the early years of Meiji. For instance, Nishi Amane in his *Hyakugaku renkan* uses *shōsetsu* to refer to fables, while adopting *haishi* for “romance,” which he describes as “writings of ancient Rome . . . that are similar to history.”³³ Kikuchi Dairoku (1855–1917), who translated Robert Chambers’s (1800–1883) “Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres” (Shūji oyobi kabun, 1880), employs *shōsetsu* as a translation for “old romance,” the category in which Chambers places the Arthurian legend.³⁴ Just two years prior to the publication of *Shōsetsu shinzui*, Nakae Chōmin (1847–1901) translated Eugene Veron’s *L’esthétique* (*Aesthetics*, 1878; published in Japanese as *Ishi bigaku*, 1883) in which he introduced various literary genres of the West, including the novel, but he does not use the term *shōsetsu* at all. In fiction, Matsuura Shun’suke refers to his *Harusame bunko* (*Books of the Spring Rain*, 1876–82) as “*shōsetsu* of enlightenment” (*kaimei shōsetsu*), a work that he wrote specifically for “women and children.”³⁵ Takabatake Ransen, in his preface to *Kōsetsu kono tegashiwa* (*Unreliable Talks on the Streets*, 1879), which features biographical sketches of people from the late Edo to early Meiji periods, states that the work that follows is “an inadequate *shōsetsu*.”³⁶ Sakurada Momoe (1859–83) uses *shōsetsu* to refer to his *Nishi no umi chishio no saarashi* (*Tides of Blood and Small Storms in the Western Sea*, 1882), a translation of Alexandre Dumas’s (1802–70) work on the French Revolution, whose target audience was the readers of *Jiyū shinbun*, hence the intelligentsia of the time.³⁷ Tōkai Sanshi, too, uses *shōsetsu* to refer to his *Kajin no kigū* (*Chance Meetings with Beautiful Women*, 1885–97), a best-selling work of political fiction among the literati of the time.³⁸ During this period, therefore, *shōsetsu* referred to everything from biography to children’s fables, adventure stories to political fiction.

Despite the varying usage, however, the meaning of *shōsetsu* associated with the *hakuwa* tradition appears to be dominant, especially among the intelligentsia. Many featured heroic narratives with the plot structure of “encourage virtue, castigate vice” (*kanzen chōaku*), which typically featured the “good” heroes fighting against the “evil” figures. This may have been the most established meaning because works that adhered to the *hakuwa* lineage enjoyed a long history and were still being widely read and circulated. Kyokutei Bakin’s works are the most well known of *hakuwa* adaptations, which were extremely popular among the Meiji literati. Moreover, *hakuwa* narratives grew in number and popularity between 1882 and 1885, roughly the time Shōyō conceptualized and wrote *Shōsetsu shinzui*.³⁹

The linguistic style of the *bakuwa* adaptations was carried over to early Meiji fiction. Such stories often took the form of “translations” of European novels, which were very popular among *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s target audience, namely, “established and learned men” (*taijin gakusha*).⁴⁰ “Translation” took a variety of forms in early Meiji Japan, such as adaptation (*hon'an*) and content-oriented translation (*iyaku*).⁴¹ Accordingly, there really was no clear boundary between the translated works and the original works produced by the writers; the distinction depended on whether the writer/translator would care to mention the presence of an “original” text from which he produced his own. The *bakuwa*-style works I mention later, therefore, include both “translations” and “non-translations.”

What is important for our purposes is that these works expressed the political energy of the time. The country from which the writers picked the works often reflected their political stance. Members of the Jiyūtō (Liberal Party), such as Sakurada Momoe, Miyazaki Muryū (1855–89), and Sakazaki Shiran, translated French works that thematized the French Revolution to prefigure a revolution in Meiji Japan. Sakurada and Muryū translated Alexandre Dumas's *Mémoires d'un médecin: Joseph Balsamo* (*The Memoirs of a Physician*, 1846–48) and *Ange Pitou* (*Six Years Later; or, The Taking of the Bastille*, 1853), respectively, for such a purpose. A number of Victor Hugo works (1802–85) also circulated, especially after Itagaki Taisuke's (1837–1919) famous meeting with the writer during his trip to France in 1882. Itagaki, a well-known advocate of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, asked Hugo about the effective ways to spread political awareness among the “uncivilized” people of Japan. Hugo told Itagaki to have them read novels such as his own. Itagaki accordingly returned to Japan with boxes of books, which resulted in a dramatic increase in translated fiction after 1882. Jiyūtō writers were also known for their fondness for the anarchists in Russia. Muryū's *Kishūshū* (*Lamenting Spirits*, 1884), an adaptation of *La Russie Sotteranea* (*Underground Russia*, 1882) by S. Stepniak (1851–95), is one such example.

Among the members of the Kaishintō (Constitutional Reform Party), Yano Ryūkei was perhaps the most popular writer. His publication *Keikoku bidan* (*Illustrious Tales of Statesmanship*, 1883), a work based on Greek history, became one of the best sellers of the time. The popularity of such fiction culminated with Tōkai Sanshi's *Kajin no kigū*, which began serialization the same year that *Shōsetsu shinzui* and *Tōsei shosei katagi* were published and, despite several lapses, continued publication until 1897.⁴²

Many of these narratives, including Sakurada's and Muryū's translations of Dumas's texts, as well as *Keikoku bidan* and *Kajin no kigū*, feature heroes who

seek to make right the wrongs done to them, clearly drawing on the *hakuwa* tradition in both linguistic style and theme. The popularity of these texts and their assimilation into the *hakuwa* tradition prove to be a large obstacle for *Shōsetsu shinzui* in its effort to dissociate *shōsetsu* from the *hakuwa* narratives. In order for the term *shōsetsu* to take on a new meaning, *Shōsetsu shinzui* had to first negotiate with the semantic economy that identified such works as “*shōsetsu*.” Despite their popularity—or perhaps precisely because of it—these works are deliberately effaced from the textual surface of *Shōsetsu shinzui*. *Shōsetsu shinzui* attempts to sever the term *shōsetsu* from its previous semantic economy and forcefully connect it with the “novel.”

“Novel” was an amorphous term for the Meiji readership. This is perhaps best illustrated by the preface to Oda Jun’ichirō’s *Karyū shunwa* (*Romantic Stories of Blossoms*, 1879), an abridged translation of Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s *Ernest Maltravers* (1837) and its sequel, *Alice* (1838), which was extremely popular among the youths of the time. Narushima Ryūhoku (1837–84), who wrote the preface to Oda Jun’ichirō’s translation, has the following to say:

Hard-headed scholars say, “People of Western countries are forever bound by practicality and preach the importance of profit but have no taste (*fūryū*) or emotions (*jōchi*).” This is a result of a complete blindness on the part of the scholars. I have traveled aboard a ship for a year and closely interacted with [people of Western countries] on deck. Their emotions were very much like mine.⁴³

Ryūhoku ends the preface by saying *Karyū shunwa* will show precisely that. This preface allows us to discern the conditions under which *Karyū shunwa* was published. Western texts that had been translated previously had focused on “profit” and “practicality” to such an extent that the audience had conjured up the image of people in Western countries as lacking “taste or emotions.” Until *Karyū shunwa*’s publication in 1879, works that fell under the rubric of “practical knowledge,” such as political philosophy, economics, science, and geography, were given higher priority than fiction.⁴⁴ The Japanese readership that Ryūhoku addressed, in other words, was unfamiliar with the literary practices of the West; the novel was a vague concept, and its defining characteristics were far from clear to the readers.

Given the equation “*shōsetsu* = novel” that appears at the end of the introduction to *Shōsetsu shinzui*, we often forget that the equation itself was far from stabilized around the time *Shōsetsu shinzui* was written. Although the title of the work gives us the impression that it describes the essence of a preexisting entity called *shōsetsu*, *Shōsetsu shinzui* is not a descriptive piece but one better

situated as a prescriptive piece. It is a text that attempted to *produce* a medium appropriate for the designation “artistic *shōsetsu*,” which had yet to take form.

“Literature” as “Modern Knowledge”

In more ways than one, the production of the *shōsetsu* engages with the formation of “modern knowledge.” First, disciplinary boundaries were changing: *bungaku* (later “literature”) was clearly an amorphous entity, and so were other forms of knowledge. As I suggested earlier, boundaries between history, politics, and literature were far from established. Accordingly, *Shōsetsu shinzui* was governed by the need to sever *shōsetsu* from politics and history and establish *shōsetsu* as a legitimate form of knowledge in and of itself. Second, in the early Meiji period, what could qualify as “knowledge” was heavily contested. The value of *shōsetsu* was thus not a given; in fact, it was considered secondary to disciplines like history and politics, which were perceived to have a role in the nation-building process. The evaluative set of criteria for “knowledge” shifted throughout the first two decades of the Meiji period, and educational reforms were instituted accordingly.

Integral to such shifting paradigms of knowledge was a conflict between scholars of “Western learning” (*yōgaku*), “native learning” (*kokugaku*), and Confucian-based *kangaku*. Although a simplistic narrative of Japan’s modernization typically discusses how Western learning gained prominence, slighting the “premodern” forms of learning in Japan’s effort at modernization, such linear characterization does not do justice to the complex, often politically charged, processes involved in the development of modern knowledge.

Even among the advocates of Western learning, conflicts persisted. They played out in a struggle between government-sponsored and privately owned schools, which paralleled the struggle between the government officials and the Freedom and People’s Rights activists. Hence these conflicts were directly related to the political debates over the legislative forms, judicial systems, and so on. Just like the novels that they translated, the Jiyūtō activists advocated the French system, and Kaishintō activists the British, whereas the central members of the government leaned primarily toward the Prussian system, especially for its constitution. The educational curriculum and reforms reinforced each party’s beliefs. In short, they were far from uniform.

Such discord was further complicated as the Confucian scholars, whose study was deemed “old-fashioned” in the first decade of the Meiji period, began to reengage in the power struggle in the early 1880s. This was a part of the

government-instituted reform, which sought to neutralize the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, that was considered to have been motivated by Western learning. Criticizing the scholars of Western learning for focusing only on "intellectual education" (*chiiku*), the Confucian scholars stressed the need for "moral education" (*tokuiku*) and argued for internal reform.

The power struggle between the various advocates of Western learning and Confucian scholars shapes *Shōsetsu shinzui* in varying ways, at first primarily as a force that labels *shōsetsu* as morally corrupt (by Confucian doctrine) and impractical (by the scholars of Western learning who espoused "practical knowledge"). *Shōsetsu shinzui* addresses these negative forces that shun *shōsetsu* as it tries to elevate the *shōsetsu* as a form of knowledge, a medium appropriate for "established and learned men."

The development of the university system and the institutionalization of "literature" are also of importance in examining the discursive forces that endorsed the production of literature. Literature entered the university within a few years of *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s publication, when Tokyo Imperial University established Kokubungakka (Department of National Letters) in 1889. Before this time, Tokyo University's Bungakubu (School of Letters) had included Wakan Bungakka (Department of Japanese and Chinese Letters) from 1877, but apparently it was very unpopular. In 1882, Katō Hiroyuki (1836–1916), then president of Tokyo University, established Koten Kōshūka (Program for Study in the Classics), separate from the already existing Department of Japanese and Chinese Letters. Such a reform marked the government's effort to gain control over opposition movements; it was an attempt to counter the Westernizing impulses that dominated the educational arena in the early years of the Meiji period.⁴⁵ In 1885, the Department of Japanese and Chinese Letters was split into Wabungakka (Department of Japanese Letters) and Kanbungakka (Department of Sino-Japanese Letters), and the Department of Japanese Letters was given the task to revive the study of Japanese classics. The Program for Study in the Classics was rather short-lived and closed in 1888, with only two classes of students graduating; interestingly, however, the graduates of this program and the students of the Department of Japanese Letters—renamed Kokubungakka (Department of National Letters) in 1889—contributed to the development of "national literature" within the university.⁴⁶

Numerous literary histories (*bungakushi*) were produced within this academic arena. Literary histories, which embody an effort to demarcate disciplinary boundaries through the writing of its history, contain many *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés. The actual link between *Shōsetsu shinzui* and national literature,

however, is not easy to decipher. Given *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s initial obscurity, national literature appears to have discovered *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés independently.⁴⁷ In response to the antiquarian studies of literature before them, the new scholars read texts as a reflection of the time and of the people's "inner spirit." Literary historians thus made many references to a "mirror of life" (*jinsei no kagami*) and "a reflective mirror of society" (*shakai no hansha kagami*) in situating works of literature as they linked the texts to people's "internal lives" (*shinteki seikatsu*) and "emotions and thoughts" (*kanjō shisō*).⁴⁸ Mikami Sanji and Takatsu Kuwasaburō's *Nihon bungakushi* (*History of Japanese Letters*, 1890), for example, claims that "literature is a reflection of people's heart/mind" (*jinshin*).⁴⁹ Regardless of the literary histories' actual connection to *Shōsetsu shinzui*, the academic national literature founded in 1889, four years after *Shōsetsu shinzui*'s publication, clearly embodies the discursive forces that facilitated the "inward" turn that ultimately endorsed the centrality of "emotions, customs, and manners" in the *shōsetsu*.

The appearance of the maxim "autonomy of knowledge" in the early to mid-1880s also adds critical dimension to my inquiry into the realm of knowledge. The autonomy of knowledge, which argued for depoliticization of knowledge, replicated the rejection of the political habitus, a central force that shapes the epistemological shift. It further sought to define knowledge as a "national" medium, rather than one divided by varying political agenda espoused by different factions, government or otherwise. As such, it engages with the government's objective to establish national literature in the academia to counter the Westernizing impulses: they both coincidentally facilitate the apparent nationalization of literature. National literature took form as the graduates of the Department of Japanese Letters and Program for Study in the Classics began to institutionalize the discipline through compilation of literary histories that, as mentioned earlier, defined the realm of literature with *Shōsetsu shinzui* clichés. Nationalization, depoliticization, and the inward turn in literature coalesce in the realm of knowledge. Accordingly, the reforms that shaped the realm of knowledge and the educational arena are of special interest to my project.

The Newfound Geographical and Historical Awareness: Ideology of Configuration

This project also examines the newly established geographical awareness and how it, too, facilitates the epistemological shift in literature. The category of literature came into being as the national and the global were being discovered. In

exploring the new geographical paradigm, my primary focus is the ideological construction of “Asia” in early to mid-1880s Japan. The perspective I take draws from recent critical works that have given emphasis to the dialogue within nations in East Asia, which not only offset the imbalance apparent in the previous narratives of modernity that overemphasized the Western role but also recognize the importance of “Asia” in Japan’s relationship vis-à-vis the West.⁵⁰

In the early Meiji period, Asia was certainly not a stable or self-evident figure; it was still a contested site, both geographically and culturally. The manner in which Meiji Japan constructed the figure of Asia cannot be understood without the context of the newly found geographical awareness and the power politics that emerged along with it, which prompted a new set of negotiations within Asia.

I wish to examine the general paradigm that shapes this newly found “world” thematized by many writings of the time. Although this study focuses primarily on the new geographical awareness that appears in post-Meiji Restoration texts, the worldview began to shift long before the Restoration. As Yamamuro Shin’ichi and other scholars point out, this new worldview was one that the Japanese were familiar with through the maps and travel writings of the seventeenth century, such as Matteo Ricci’s *Kon’yo bankoku zenzu* (The Comprehensive Map of All Countries of the World, composed in 1602 and taken to Japan in 1605).⁵¹ Though certainly not accepted without controversy, the theories that the earth is in fact round and the world is divided into five continents (later amended to six) were disseminated. Because some Japanese intellectuals embraced it as a means to criticize Sinocentrism, the worldview inscribed in Matteo Ricci’s map gained faster acceptance in Japan than in China. This is evident from the first world map composed in Japan in 1645, *Bankoku sōzu* (The Comprehensive Map of the World), which follows the oceanic line drawn in Matteo Ricci’s map almost exactly. One of the works that had a tremendous impact upon the Edo intellectuals’ geographical awareness, Nishikawa Joken’s *Zōho kai tsūshō kō* (*On the Passage of Trade between China and Other Countries*, 1708) and its supplementary map, also traces the outline of Matteo Ricci’s map. In the early Meiji years, works adopted as school textbooks in Japan, such as Fukuzawa Yukichi’s *Sekai kunizukushi* (*The Countries of the World*, 1869) and Uchida Masao’s *Yochi shiryaku* (*An Abridged Account of the World*, 1870), introduced the world of the five continents and disseminated such geography and the mode of categorization of the world inscribed within it.

This world order is complicated by the categories of the *sei'yō* and *tō'yō* and the various processes of negotiation these terms went through before they eventu-