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## The rise of criticism (1886-1889)

– Sohō, Hanpō, Ōnishi, Ōgai –

EMMANUEL LOZERAND

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### *Abstracts*

English Français

The rapid development of Japanese press during the twenty first years of the Meiji era led to the appearance of a new type of writings: book reviews and criticism. This article tries to explain the sudden appearance between 1886 and 1889 of an interpretive discourse in Japan. It argues that the rise of criticism is no accident, but rather the consequence and embodiment of other changes, implemented with varying speed and at different moments, but which converged during this period to give rise to the founding texts of Tokutomi Sohō, Takada Hanpō, Ōnishi Hajime and Mori Ōgai.

Le développement rapide de la presse japonaise durant les vingt premières années de l'ère Meiji entraîna l'apparition d'un nouveau type d'écrits : le compte rendu d'ouvrage et la critique. Cet article tente d'expliquer la soudaine apparition d'un discours interprétatif entre 1886 et 1889 au Japon. Il explique que l'avènement de la critique n'est pas un accident, mais plutôt la conséquence et l'incarnation d'autres mutations effectuées à des rythmes différents depuis des moments différents, mais qui convergent en ces quelques années pour donner naissance aux textes fondateurs de Tokutomi Sohō, Takada Hanpō, Ōnishi Hajime et Mori Ōgai.

### *Index terms*

**Keywords :** modern Japan, modern literature, Meiji era, press history, literary criticism, Kokumin no tomo, Tokutomi Sohō (1863-1957), Takada Hanpō (1860-1938), Ōnishi Hajime (1864-1900), Mori Ōgai (1862-1922)

**Mots-clés :** Japon moderne, littérature moderne, histoire de la presse, Kokumin no tomo,

critique littéraire, Tokutomi Sohō (1853-1957), Takada Hanpō (1860-1938), Ōnishi Hajime (1864-1900), Mori Ōgai (1862-1922)

**Chronological index** : Meiji

### Editor's note

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## Full text

*Before the 19th century there were critiques, not criticism.*  
Albert Thibaudet, *Physiologie de la critique*, 1930

*Thus, criticism is absolutely essential.*  
夫れ批評は寔に止むべからず  
Mori Ōgai, “*Shigarami zōshi no honryō*”, 1889

- 1 Beginning with issue 9, in September 1887, the journal *Kokumin no tomo* 国民之友 (The People's Friend) reorganised its layout to include a section entitled “Criticism” (*hihyō* 批評). This would appear to have been the first time a Japanese periodical created a space specifically for texts intended to provide a systematic review of newly published material.<sup>1</sup> An “Announcement” (*shakoku* 社告), in which the journal's editorial staff explained the role ideally assigned to each of the new sections, stated that:

The “Criticism” section will be reserved for frank reviews, either succinct or detailed, of recent publications and analyses of newspaper and journal editorials.

批評ニハ直筆シタル新刊書籍ノ詳評略評及ヒ新聞雑誌社説ノ評論アリ<sup>2</sup>

- 2 This stance was neither whimsical nor isolated. Indeed, the previous month (August 1887) had seen the creation of *Shuppan geppyō* 出版月評 (Monthly Publishing Review), whose chief aim was to “offer a fair and impartial review of recent publications in addition to important older works” (新刊書並重要なる旧著書に公平無私の批評を下し). This endeavour continued until August 1891. It was the first time that a Japanese periodical had assigned itself such an objective.
- 3 *Shuppan geppyō*, just like the section in *Kokumin no tomo*, was instrumental in establishing criticism as an independent field. The genre would subsequently grow at a rapid pace, quickly occupying a prominent place in modern Japan. This is illustrated by the fact that in 1936 Hijikata Teichi 土方定一 (1904-1980) was able to write a book on the subject entitled *Kindai Nihon bungaku hyōronshi* 近代日本文学評論史 (The History of Modern Japanese Literary Criticism). More generally, it could no doubt be said that the vitality of critical discourse continued unabated throughout the entire twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> However, it is the emergence of criticism, during the final third of the 1880s, that I would like to reflect on here by examining first the general conditions that explain this phenomenon, and then some of the contemporary theoretical texts that attempted to illustrate, from a conceptual perspective, and with their own internal dynamics, the necessity, task and role of criticism. I am thinking in particular of Takada Hanpō's 1886 text “*Tōsei shosei katagi no hihyō*” (A Critique of *Portraits of Contemporary Students*), Ōnishi Hajime's “*Hihyōron*” (Essay on Criticism) from 1888, and Mori Ōgai's “*Shigarami zōshi no honryō*” (The Home Territory of *The Weir*) from 1889.<sup>4</sup> First, however, how can we explain the sudden appearance, at this particular moment in time, of an interpretive discourse focused chiefly on recent publications?

# The “flood” of publications at the end of the 1880s

- 4 This new-found desire to review recent publications would appear to result primarily from a quantitative change. Recalling the second decade of the Meiji era (1887-1896), Tokutomi Sohō 徳富蘇峰 (1863-1957), a major figure from that era, wrote:

If we attempt to determine which of the phenomena witnessed by our country [during the second decade of the Meiji era] was the most astounding, it was undeniably the nationwide dissemination of countless books and opuscles, which left bookstore shelves en masse in a tumultuous flood.

起りたる我国の現象に付て、其最も人目を驚かすに堪へたる者を調査せば、無数の書籍、小冊子等が混々滔々として、一時に書籍店の棚上よりして、全国に汎濫したるを以て、其一とせざる可らず。<sup>5</sup>

- 5 An indirect account from his younger brother Roka 蘆花 (1868-1927) continues in this vein. In his autobiographic novel *Kuroi me to chairo no me* 黒い眼と茶色の目 (Black Eyes, Brown Eyes), published in 1914, he wrote:

From the young blood of the Meiji era, then in its twentieth year [1887], sprang forth innumerable new publications each month, sent as gifts to Minhōsha for review (*hihyō shōkai* 批評紹介). Slim political novels or laborious translations of foreign texts: all manner of books piled up at Minhōsha.

二十歳になつた明治の若い血から月々生れ出づる夥しい新刊物は、批評紹介を求めて民朋社に寄贈された。薄つぺらな政治小説、信偏な翻訳小説、雑多の著書は民朋社に山をなした。<sup>6</sup>

- 6 The year 1887 is mentioned in this passage and the narrator then cites, as an example of these innumerable new works, the novel *Ukigumo* 浮雲 (Floating Clouds) by Futabatei Shimei 二葉亭四迷 (1864-1909), the first volume of which was published that very same year. However, most notable is the link established from the outset between the explosion in new publications and the field of criticism, for behind the transparent mask of Minhōsha 民朋社 was of course Min'yūsha 民友社,<sup>7</sup> none other than the publishing house responsible for *Kokumin no tomo*.

- 7 The Tokutomi brothers' recollections are substantiated by the figures. Beginning in 1886, the Japanese publishing industry – which had experienced a sudden slump the previous year following six years of regular growth between 1879 and 1885 – saw a reversal of its fortunes. In the space of one year, the number of books published in Japan increased by almost twenty per cent, rising from 8,109 titles (in 1886) to 9,549 (in 1887), then to 11,273 in 1888, 14,066 in 1889 and 18,720 in 1890<sup>8</sup>. Incidentally, it is not insignificant that the best tool for keeping apprised of new publications changed status at precisely that moment in time. Up until then the Bureau for Books (Toshokyoku 図書局) at the Ministry for Home Affairs (Naimushō 内務省) had published a *Monthly Publishing Booklist* (*Shuppan shomoku geppō* 出版書目月報) listing the works (*nōhon* 納本) submitted for preliminary screening. However, this official bulletin disappeared in August 1887, after issue 114, and was replaced by a list that appeared in none other than *Shuppan geppyō*, at the end of each copy in a section entitled “Publishing Booklist” (*Shuppan shomoku* 出版書目).<sup>9</sup>

- 8 This explosion in publishing cannot simply be explained as resulting from a technological revolution. Although the transition from xylography to typography, which largely took place between 1870 and 1880 (a little later in the case of fictional works),<sup>10</sup> undoubtedly enabled print runs to be increased, there had to be a demand, or at least a receptiveness, from the whole of society for such an increase, and in particular, a vast commercial publishing industry capable of making a large number of books available to

a wide audience needed to be developed.

9 It was precisely in 1887 that Hakubunkan 博文館 came into existence, becoming in less than ten years the first modern publishing giant in Japan. This publishing house stood in stark contrast to those that had been established since the beginning of the Meiji era.<sup>11</sup> What set Hakubunkan apart was that it was first and foremost a commercial, profit-seeking enterprise. Its founders, Ōhashi Sahei 大橋佐平 (1835-1901) and son Shintarō 新太郎 (1863-1944), were essentially businessmen who saw in the printed word a profitable source of trade and industry. In this respect they differed fundamentally from intellectuals like Taguchi Ukichi 田口卯吉 (1855-1905) and Tokutomi Sohō who, having understood the practical constraints imposed by the dissemination of ideas, had set up publishing houses such as Tōkyō keizai zasshisha 東京經濟雜誌社 and Min'yūsha. Incidentally, Ōhashi Sahei was of merchant stock.<sup>12</sup>

10 The company was a dazzling success. Ōhashi published journal after journal: he had ten in his catalogue after just eighteen months and used the capital accumulated to adopt a plethoric publishing policy. He quickly achieved his objective of publishing one new title per day, the result being that by 1892 he had already published approximately 500 titles, amounting to over 1,700 volumes. These were printed in great number, at a modest price, and making revolutionary use of distribution channels.

11 However, one should not make the mistake of thinking that Hakubunkan specialised in publishing second-rate books.<sup>13</sup> Although this publishing house was a commercial venture, its strategy was based on variety and quality. It notably published remarkable multi-volume works of a practical, encyclopaedic, historical or literary nature, for which it enlisted the services of the most eminent writers and scholars. The dazzling string of successes it achieved enabled it to dominate the market within just a few years.

12 Journals played a vital role both in the rise of criticism and the rapid growth of the publishing industry, as I have already suggested. And in the final third of the 1880s, periodicals such as journals and newspapers also underwent a fundamental transformation.

13 The unique medium of the journal took root in Japan at the beginning of the 1870s. *Meiroku zasshi* 明六雜誌 (Meiji Sixth Journal), founded in 1874 by Mori Arinori 森有礼 (1847-1889) and the other members of Meirokusha, featured many well-known names from among the intelligentsia of the period and symbolised this flourishing of the medium. Nonetheless, a look at statistics on the number of journals created<sup>14</sup> reveals that it was between 1875 and 1877 that the potential of this press organ was suddenly realised. Over this three-year period, an average of eighty new titles appeared each year. Although growth slowed somewhat over the following years, it continued apace, to the extent that between thirty and fifty new titles were created each year between 1882 and 1889.<sup>15</sup>

14 These journals were extremely varied in nature. Some were devoted to disseminating new learning, such as *Meiroku zasshi*; some were scholarly, such as *Tōyō gakugei zasshi* 東洋学芸雜誌 (Journal of Oriental Science and Art, created in 1881) and *Tōkyō jiji shinshi* 東京医事新誌 (Tokyo New Medical Journal, founded in 1877); some were professional, such as *Tōkyō keizai zasshi* 東京經濟雜誌 (Tokyo Economics Journal, set up in 1879); and some literary or artistic, such as *Kagetsu shinshi* 花月新誌 (New Moon and Flowers Journal, created in 1877). Some journals targeted a specific audience, such as *Jogaku zasshi* 女学雜誌 (The Women's Magazine, founded in 1885). Others were merely for entertainment, such as *Marumarū chinbun* 团团珍聞 (Strange News...!, founded in 1877). While others, such as *Ōmei zasshi* 嚶鳴雜誌 (Journal of the Good Friends Chorus, created in 1879), were engaged in political battles or championed a particular religion. However, it seems that no strictly general-interest publications existed, although *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, for example, was notable for its broad editorial content.

15 The change that occurred at the end of the 1880s was decisive. It was both qualitative and quantitative in nature, and was embodied by two titles in particular:<sup>16</sup> the

aforementioned *Kokumin no tomo*, founded in February 1887 by Tokutomi Sohō, and *Nipponjin* 日本人 (The Japanese), founded in April 1888. Indeed, the content of these two journals was designed to be general interest. The subheading of *Kokumin no tomo* spoke volumes on this point: “Seiji shakai keizai oyobi bungaku no hyōron” 政治社会経済及文学之評論 (Political, Social, Economic and Literary Critiques). Moreover, they targeted a much wider audience than their predecessors.

16 Circulation figures for *Kokumin no tomo* soon reached, and then exceeded, over 10,000 copies per issue, whereas it is thought that until then journals had rarely made it past the 1,000 mark. While explaining the originality of these two new journals in a text entitled “*Kokumin no tomo oyobi Nipponjin*” 国民之友及ひ日本人, published in six instalments in *Tōkyō keizai zasshi* starting in the autumn of 1888,<sup>17</sup> Miyazaki Koshoshi 宮崎湖処子 (1864-1922) expressed his surprise that *Kokumin no tomo* had immediately attracted the attention of newspapers from around “the entire country” (*zenkoku* 全国).<sup>18</sup> Success came rapidly for the journal, which went from monthly publication at its outset to being published bi-monthly in October 1887, and then tri-monthly in January 1889.

17 The distribution of journals – in greater numbers, with increased frequency and speed, and on a national scale – enabled or accompanied the creation of a platform for debating a wide variety of topical issues outside of a coterie of specialists. This did not occur at the expense of daily newspapers, with which, on the contrary, journals found an equilibrium as their circulation grew.

18 Newspapers, for their part, experienced their period of rapid growth between 1870 and 1874. The period from 1883-1884 was less happy. The so-called “large newspapers” (*ō-shinbun* 大新聞) experienced a decline caused by repression, the fall in political activity and also perhaps the economic depression. Centre stage passed to the “small newspapers” (*ko-shinbun* 小新聞) with their focus on entertainment. However, it was precisely from 1886-1887 onwards that this distinction between the two categories began to blur. The “small newspapers” expanded and diversified, while the “large newspapers” sought to increase their readership. The commercial aspect of the press industry irreparably took to the fore.<sup>19</sup> Newspapers became products that were required to make a profit, and doing so meant increasing sales, lowering prices and improving industrial mass production.

19 From the latter half of the 1880s onwards, newspapers took full advantage of the advances in technology: membership of international press agencies, implementation or expansion of postal, rail and telegraph networks, purchase of sophisticated rotary printing presses. Yano Fumio 矢野文雄 (Ryūkei 竜溪, 1850-1931), for example, implemented profound changes at the *Yūbin hōchi shinbun* 郵便報知新聞 in 1886, following a two-year trip to Europe where he witnessed the success of dailies such as the Parisian newspaper *Le Petit Journal*, with its circulation of over one million copies. Seki Naohiko 関直彦 (1857-1934) replaced Fukuchi Ōchi as head of the *Tōkyō nichinichi shinbun* 東京日々新聞 and radically changed its orientation in 1888. Above all, that same year Murayama Ryūhei 村山竜平 (1850-1933), the owner of *Ōsaka asahi shinbun* 大阪朝日新聞, aggressively introduced the *Tōkyō asahi shinbun* 東京朝日新聞 to the capital, where it was a great commercial success.

20 Who were the readers of this new mass of printed matter sweeping through Japan? Among others, they were the products of the education system created by the Education System Order (*gakusei* 学制) of 1872. Although the figures are less reliable than they appear,<sup>20</sup> we know that literacy rates in Edo-period Japan were high. The fact remains that the reforms introduced approximately fifteen years earlier bore their first fruits in around 1885-1890. At this point in time three million Japanese, out of a population of approximately thirty-eight million, were enrolled in elementary education and 15,000 in middle schools where they followed a standardised curriculum.<sup>21</sup>

21 Enrolment figures for middle school education may seem low; however, these



students constituted an extremely important category for the future of Japan since they represented almost the entirety of the country's future elites. Whereas in 1872, faced with the urgent need to introduce elementary education, little interest had been placed on secondary education, the situation in 1886 was extremely different. At this time Mori Arinori, appointed education minister the previous year, introduced a series of decrees that profoundly transformed Japan's education system, and in particular the entire secondary level (*chūtō kyōiku* 中等教育) which included middle schools (*chūgakkō* 中学校), higher schools for girls (*kōtō jogakkō* 高等女学校) and the various vocational schools (*jitsugyō gakkō* 実業学校). Similarly, also noteworthy is the 1886 transformation of Tokyo University (Tōkyō daigaku 東京大学), founded in 1877, into the Imperial University (Teikoku daigaku 帝国大学). It marked a further step forward in developing Japan's higher education, thus contributing decisively to the creation of a new public sphere.

22 To the above information two further points must be added, admittedly more general in nature but nonetheless extremely significant. Firstly, in 1886 the Japanese economy, in a severe recession since the implementation by Matsukata Masayoshi 松方正義 (1835-1924) in 1881 of an austerity plan and aggravated by extremely bad harvests in 1883, 1884 and 1885, entered a new cycle of vigorous growth that clearly encouraged the growth of the printed word. This palpable economic upturn created a kind of optimism that was violently dampened by the failures and attitude of the Itō Hirobumi 伊藤博文 (1841-1909) administration.

23 Secondly, attention must be paid to the political climate at home and abroad. The circumstances in the latter half of the 1880s were in fact exceptional. In 1880 the demands of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement (*Jiyū minken undo* 自由民権運動), active since 1874, were partially fulfilled when an imperial rescript promised to convene a national assembly by 1890 at the latest. Henceforth, the movement's violent or spectacular protests ceased and were replaced with the task of establishing political parties<sup>22</sup> and waging a battle of opinions in the press.

24 In 1885 the first cabinet was established, headed by Itō Hirobumi and with Inoue Kaoru 井上馨 (1835-1915) in charge of foreign affairs. It was during this period, in 1886 and 1887, that there was a return to political unrest with the creation of the Union of Like-Minded Persons (Daidō danketsu 大同団結), in which Gotō Shōjirō 後藤象二郎 (1838-1897) was a dominant figure. Its members were protesting against the failure of Inoue Kaoru's efforts to revise the unequal treaties, the attacks on the freedom of the press and the burden of land taxes. They addressed a petition to the government on "[these] three major affairs" (*sandai jiken kenpaku* 三大事件建白).

25 The first two elements are extremely significant from the point of view of interest to us here. From the moment he was appointed Inoue had raised great hopes with regards Japan's foreign policy by entering into negotiations to revise the treaties (*jōyaku kaisei* 条約改正) which, since the end of the *bakufu*, had reinforced Japan's inferior status in the international arena. He failed, for reasons linked both to Japan and overseas, and was forced to resign in September 1887. Public opinion had been fired up for the cause and the public's anger was commensurate with its expectations. Furthermore, events like the so-called "Normanton Incident" in 1886 – in which the sinking of a ship highlighted the racism and impunity of the West – provided a cruel illustration of the colonial contempt in which Westerners held Japan. Also noteworthy is the cholera epidemic that broke out that same year, causing more than 150,000 deaths. This epidemic could no doubt have been avoided had the Western powers not used the unequal treaties to refuse the quarantine measures the Japanese government was intending to impose on foreign ships and nationals.<sup>23</sup> These circumstances explain why an opposition to the government based on the defence of Japan's honour and dignity emerged at this point in time.

26 Faced with a hostile public opinion, this same government chose to go down the route of repression and in December 1887 issued an Imperial Ordinance on Safety

Preservation (*hoan jōrei* 保安条例) that was viewed by opponents as a bad law (*akuhō* 悪法). It imposed considerable restrictions on the freedom of assembly and the press, and included measures to banish leading opposition members from the capital. This repressive attitude, coming from a government with no international successes to its name, angered many of the period's young idealistic intellectuals, despite the looming prospect of a constitution being promulgated (which took place in 1889) raising public expectations. A paradox thus existed, albeit a partly illusory one if we think about it carefully: the creation of a public sphere in Meiji Japan was accompanied by intensified political censure.

27 Given this context, a brief review of the main founders of *Shuppan geppyō* would be useful, for their personalities and backgrounds are not insignificant.

28 Trained chemist Sugiura Shigetake 杉浦重剛 (1855-1924) was, along with Miyake Setsurei 三宅雪嶺 (1860-1945) and Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863-1927), one of the initiators of the group Seikyōsha 政教社 and its journal *Nipponjin*, founded in April 1888, which aimed to champion the “preservation of the national essence” (*kokusui hozon* 国粹保存).

29 Kuga Katsunan 陸羯南 (1857-1907) was the founder and president of the newspaper *Nihon* 日本 (Japan), the first issue of which was published on 11 February 1889, the day the Constitution of the Empire of Japan (*Dai Nippon teikoku kenpō* 大日本帝国憲法) was promulgated.

30 Takahashi Kenzō 高橋健三 (1855-1898), a high-ranking government official who had previously worked for the Official Gazette (*Kanpō* 官報), was also, along with Okakura Kakuzō 岡倉覚三 (Tenshin 天心, 1862-1913), one of the founders of the leading art journal *Kokka* 国華 (National Flowers) in October 1889. He later became one of the main directors of the *Ōsaka asahi shinbun*.<sup>24</sup>

31 All three of these men thus hailed from the press, newspapers or periodicals; however, they also belonged to that circle of Meiji elites who henceforth found themselves in the opposing camp to the government and who, beginning in 1886-1887, channelled all their energy into and waged all of their battles in the cultural arena, on a nationwide scale. In this respect, it is highly significant to find them behind the first journal given the task of reviewing new publications.

32 The growth of the printed word, the demonstration of opposition through debates and controversies, and the shifting of conflict from the strictly politically arena to a wider cultural sphere: in the latter half of the 1880s, and more specifically in around 1886-1887, a change in scale, and thus in nature, seemed to have occurred in Japan in the circulation of words and ideas. Is it unreasonable to see in this the creation of a veritable public sphere?<sup>25</sup> The scale of this public sphere was nationwide. Henceforth, books, journals and newspapers were potentially addressing all readers across the entire country. That a “national”, or even nationalistic, discourse crystallised at this precise moment in time is thus no surprise, whether it was the cause, the consequence or simply a correlate.<sup>26</sup> These changes brought their fill of challenges for the print media, as much in terms of form as of content.

## Criticism in the new public sphere: Tokutomi Sohō (1887)

33 In order to better understand the specific structure of this new public sphere, as well as the role criticism played within it, it would perhaps be useful to re-examine the text in which *Kokumin no tomo* explained its new layout in the autumn of 1887. It is quoted here in full:

34 In the section entitled “People’s Friend” (*Kokumin no tomo* 国民之友), firm and precise stances (*giron* 議論) will be adopted regarding the major issues of the moment



(*mokka* 目下), whether political, social, economic or literary.

The “Special Contributions” (*tokubetsu kisho* 特別寄書) section will feature stimulating opinion pieces (*ronbun* 論文) by famous writers and politicians. The “Anthologies” (*moshio-gusa* 藻塩草)<sup>27</sup> section will include charming personal essays (*zuihitsu* 隨筆) on political or literary topics. The “Documents” (*zatsuroku* 雜録) section will provide all manner of important information (*yōhō* 要報) via reports (*kiji* 記事) and statistics (*tōkei* 統計).<sup>28</sup> The “Readers” (*tōsho* 投書) section will feature texts of great worth (*takusetsu* 卓説) from anyone who wishes to contribute, whoever they may be (*kōko* 江湖). The “Criticism” (*hihyō* 批評) section will be reserved for frank reviews, succinct (*ryakuhyō* 略評) or detailed (*shōhyō* 詳評), of recent publications (*shinkan* 新刊) in addition to analyses (*hyōron* 評論) of editorials (*shasetsu* 社説) published in newspapers (*shinbun* 新聞) and journals (*zasshi* 雜誌). The “Current Affairs” (*jiji* 時事) section will feature high quality discussions (*hyōron* 評論) of topical issues from Japan and overseas (*naigai no jiji* 内外ノ時事): they will seek to illustrate the vital points (*yō* 要) and uncover the facts (*jitsu* 実).

35 Although this was merely a statement of intention – which must be compared of course to the actual articles that appeared in the different sections – and the overabundance of ameliorative qualifiers may irritate, this text is striking for the wide variety of discursive or documentary prose, as well as language levels, it envisaged for a wide-circulation, general-interest publication.

36 *Giron* 議論 (adopting of stances) and *ronbun* 論文 (opinion pieces) have similar meanings. These terms essentially imply a debate, an exchange of arguments and the adoption of a particular stance in a context where divergent opinions are expressed. They could thus be applied to Buddhist disputation. In this particular text *shasetsu* 社説 (editorial) has a related meaning. A journal like *Kokumin no tomo* thus wanted to defend specific stances in an arena where public opinion was taking shape in an intrinsically pluralistic manner.

37 *Tokubetsu kisho* 特別寄書 (special contributions) and *tōsho* 投書 ([texts submitted by] readers) imply that authors, famous or otherwise, from outside the journal provide texts for publication. In other words, in addition to its own editorial line, a journal like *Kokumin no tomo* judged it necessary and useful to provide its readers with different points of view and opinions to its own, with which it may not necessarily have agreed but which it considered meaningful. This open stance was not entirely new – Taguchi Ukichi’s *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, for example, had applied such an approach for years –, but it was no doubt the first time that it had been set out so clearly.<sup>29</sup> A shift appeared to be occurring following the age of strictly and rigidly partisan periodicals that characterised, in a fairly marked manner, the first half of the Meiji era. Henceforth, specific choices could be expressed in a wide variety of fields, without this precluding the ability to listen to other voices which, while neither overtly friendly nor bitter enemy, hailed from diverse horizons. Sohō thus designed his journal as much as a vehicle for championing a particular cause as an instrument for encouraging the appearance and flourishing of public debate.

38 The journal’s open stance thus operated in two directions. First of all, an appeal was made to “famous writers and politicians” (*yūmei naru seijika bungakusha* 有名ナル政治家文学者).<sup>30</sup> It is worth considering the qualifier “famous” (*yūmei* 有名) for a moment rather than focusing on the two types of authors mentioned, who enjoyed intellectual and moral authority at that time. It had long been possible, but particularly so during the Edo period, for an individual to acquire a name (*na* 名)<sup>31</sup> or a reputation (*hyōban* 評判) for themselves via various channels such as oral transmission – rumour (*uwasa* 噂) – and specific media like *kawaraban* 瓦版, *hyōbanki* 評判記, or *banzuke* 番付, for example.<sup>32</sup> But how many of them were truly famous during their lifetime, with the exception of a handful of *kabuki* actors, courtesans and *sumō* wrestlers? Surely one of the characteristics of the Meiji public sphere – which was also a media sphere in the

literal sense – is that thanks to a new growth in printing it established a larger, or at any rate better known, group of celebrities, from various fields, than had been possible during the Edo period? Although this line of enquiry requires some refining, is it not clear that the appearance and growth of national newspapers and journals with their soaring circulation figures, followed by the publication of photographic portraits in the second half of the 1890s,<sup>33</sup> changed to say the least the very conditions of possibility of celebrity? The wheels had been set in motion for the all-too-familiar spiral in which the media themselves create the celebrities on which they feed.

39 Nevertheless, as if in an effort to offset the somewhat perverse focus on the race for fame, another equally respectable section was created for ordinary unknown citizens who were invited to take part in the creation and exchange of ideas to be disseminated throughout Japan. The expression used to signify that everyone, without exception, could submit a manuscript is highly revealing. It is Chinese in origin and although barely used today, was widespread and part of standard usage during the Meiji era: *kōko* 江湖 (*jianghu* in Chinese),<sup>34</sup> literally “the River and the Lake”, or more specifically the Changjiang 長江<sup>35</sup> and the Dongting-hu 洞庭湖. In fact, the story goes that two Chan masters, Mazu 馬祖 and Shitou 石頭, who lived far away from each other, one West of the River and the other South of the Lake, took it in turns to receive the same disciples who studied alternately with one master and then the other. From here the expression came to mean “society”, “people” or “the world”, occasionally with the nuance of “the provinces” as opposed to the centre. If the expression remained vivid in the mid-Meiji era, it is due to its convenience for referring concretely to the entire population – which was never named as such in the compartmentalised society of Edo –, and had neither the formality, nor the abstract or overly political nature of a word like “*kokumin*” 国民 (people, nation). In principle the only restriction on publishing these texts sent from all over the country was a requirement for quality. *Takusetsu* 卓説, translated here as “texts of great worth”, no doubt referred more precisely to manuscripts in which someone “expressed their opinion”. This was in any case the precise meaning given to *shuo* 説 (*setsu* in Japanese) in the Chinese typology of genres.

40 *Moshio-gusa* 藻塩草 and *zuihitsu* 隨筆 (personal essays, literally essays “following the brush”) are synonymous and in this instance refer to less serious essays, freer in form and tone, than those that were part of public debate. Although the journal chiefly adhered to a serious editorial line focused on debate, it also felt the need to make room for subtle intelligence (*esprit de finesse*) and even entertainment by creating a space for less didactic or controversial texts that sought neither to affirm, nor to reflect or debate, or at least not openly and directly. *Zatsuroku* 雜録 (documents), *kiji* 記事 (reports), *tōkei* 統計 (statistics) and *yōhō* 要報 (important information) all demonstrate a link to objective reality, which needed to be “recorded” (*roku* 録), “documented” (*ki* 記), “measured” (*kei* 計) and “communicated” (*hō* 報). Thus, rather than being purely ideological, debates were required to draw on knowledge of the world as it was. And yet while, far from rejecting this undertaking, the journal was concerned with current events (*jiji* 時事) and the present (*mokka* 目下), it also felt the need to distance itself from reality as it appeared at first glance and increase its angles of attack in order to better understand the truth (*jitsu* 實) and the elements on which reality hinged (*yō* 要), meaning that the journal was against falsifications and superficial approaches.

41 When faced with such a wealth of terms and the profusion of different aspects in the text’s discourse, care must be taken not to commit anachronisms – since language use in the mid-Meiji era is deceptively transparent and differed subtly from usage today –, just as one must avoid giving ill-considered English equivalents based on stock translations. In reality, such non-fiction, non-narrative types of prose must be analysed and understood according to three polarities: argumentative texts designed to convince compared with those with a different chief purpose; serious texts compared with those that are less so; and texts ruled by their relationship to reality compared with those

based on self-affirmation. In some ways, all or most of these texts could be grouped into one single, vaguely all-encompassing heading such as “essays”; in reality, all are subtly but resolutely different.

42 The highly complex discursive space outlined in this text has the further characteristic of seeking to avoid neglecting, in theory, any aspect of reality. The reminder of the journal’s main fields of interest – politics, society, economics and literature – echoes its subheading. Admittedly, there appears to have been a focus on literature and politics, which are cited on several occasions, while no mention is made of religion, science and art as such. The fact remains that the journal clearly wanted to avoid confining itself to a limited sector of human activity or restricting itself to Japan, and strove instead to look outwards towards the entire world.

43 What role was assigned to criticism in such a context? Before we go any further, a lexical clarification is necessary. In contemporary Japanese the words *hyōron* 評論 and *hihyō* 批評 have become virtually synonymous, and if any difference exists it no doubt relates to the fact that “*hihyō*” is seen as having a more abstract and general meaning than “*hyōron*”, which is often restricted specifically to literary criticism.<sup>36</sup> During the Meiji era, however, the distinction between these two long-standing terms, which were suddenly destined for a new life and rise in popularity, was virtually the exact opposite. It was the term “*hihyō*” that was specifically reserved for critical reviews and the assessing of new publications,<sup>37</sup> whereas “*hyōron*” had a more general meaning that extended to “political, social, economic and literary analyses” (*seiji shakai keizai oyobi bungaku no hyōron* 政治社会経済及文学之評論), as stated in the subheading of *Kokumin no tomo*. Indeed, the prolific nature of the term “*hyōron*” in the second decade of the Meiji era (1887-1896) must be stressed, in particular in the title of innumerable journals. Etymologically, in any case, both words centre on the act of “distinguishing” (*hyō* 評) the good from the bad and establishing dividing lines in the complexity of the world; in other words, making value judgments via a precise examination of reality.

44 As for “criticism” (*hihyō*) proper, in the more restrictive sense employed in the *Kokumin no tomo* section heading, there are three important points to underline. Firstly, criticism was an activity that had to avoid indulgence. This is clearly visible in the expression “frank” analyses (*chokuhitsu shitaru* 直筆シタル), which more precisely means to “write without concealing the reality”, as opposed to “*kyokuhitsu*” 曲筆 (“writing while distorting the facts”).<sup>38</sup> This assertion of rigour and impartiality was pivotal in the development of criticism in the Meiji era, as we shall see. The objective was no doubt to avoid a situation where journalists, under pressure from the editorial or financial powers that be, merely published brief promotional paragraphs.

45 The second point relates to the distinction made by the journal between “succinct” (*ryaku* 略) reviews and more “detailed” (*shō* 詳) ones. This distinction, also visible in the journal *Shuppan geppyō*, which clearly distinguished between the two types of criticism in its table of contents,<sup>39</sup> seems to have been the solution adopted to avoid the contradiction brought about by the dual demands made on criticism: to deal with the profusion of publications by reviewing as many books as possible, while nonetheless offering an in-depth analysis. It is striking to observe that just a few years earlier, one Émile Zola solved the same dilemma in the same way. Having been placed in charge of advertising at the publishing house Louis Hachette in 1862, Zola launched a column entitled “Books of Today and Tomorrow” in the newspaper *L'Événement* (the future *Figaro*), owned by Villemessant, in 1866. Devoted to the books of the day, and preferably those still in the process of being printed, this daily column was lively and eclectic, consisting of short reviews – of between ten and fifteen lines – presenting books on medicine, geography, spiritualism, law, philosophy or history, in addition to novels! In his first column on 31 January 1866, Zola explained his work as “public reader” in the following terms:

My task is to provide readers of *L'événement* with daily literary news; my task is to read, before everyone else, the some 100,000 pages published each month in Paris.<sup>40</sup>

46 However, the critic soon launched another column in the same newspaper entitled “Marble and Plaster”. This somewhat solemn-sounding column, with a slower pace and longer articles, allowed Zola to provide in-depth analyses of selected authors: Taine, Flaubert, Littré, Michelet, Gautier and Sainte-Beuve, for example.

47 Although this fluctuating of criticism between short reviews and in-depth analyses appears to have been a congenital trait, it must also be pointed out that the long essay seemed destined to remain the prerogative of journals, with some exceptions of course, if only for practical reasons. Thus, as underlined by Komori Yōichi,<sup>41</sup> it was no doubt the development of the long review that allowed journals to definitively establish their specificity and independence with regards newspapers and become a separate medium.

48 The final striking point is the subject matter *Kokumin no tomo* assigned to its “Criticism” section. On the one hand the aim was to review “recent publications” (*shinkan* 新刊), and on the other “editorials” (*shasetsu* 社説) published in newspapers (*shinbun* 新聞) and journals (*zasshi* 雑誌). Thus, what emerged through this journalistic endeavour was a passion for topicality to which Zola bore witness and which Villemessant summed up in the expression “being on the lookout for books as they are published, and if possible before”, in other words, books that were either in print or in the process of being printed. This was a step in the direction carved out by *Shuppan geppyō*, except that – significantly – this journal claimed to also be interested in “important older works” (*jūyō naru kyū-chosho* 重要なる旧著書). This preference for the immediate present as opposed to old canonical works – or those formerly considered as such – broke with the tradition of interpreting and commenting on the classics. What came about instead was a criticism focused on the here and now, valued as such for its quality of being contemporary, in principle without considering other criteria of authority. As Baudelaire wrote in 1863, in “The Painter of Modern Life”, henceforth “the pleasure which we derive from the representation of the present is due not only to the beauty with which it can be invested, but also to its essential quality of being present.”<sup>42</sup>

49 Furthermore, criticism as viewed by *Kokumin no tomo* made room for commentary from other newspapers and journals. The journal clearly intended to create an arena for dialogue and debate – a forum –, such was the importance it accorded to knowing the opinions of others, to understanding and commenting on them and even, if needs be, refuting them. The era of blind and virulent clashes between press organs ruled by special interest groups gave way to an age in which, irrespective of any differences and controversies, a form of “public debate” (*kōron* 公論)<sup>43</sup> was taking shape. Engaging in controversial debate was all the rage, in politics naturally, in literature, art and on social issues. However, a well ordered exchange of arguments was the norm. Thus, criticism seems to have emerged just as the political battle became first and foremost a battle of opinions and words rather than a head-on, merciless clash between military or financial powers. In fact, this was one of the things that most puzzled Fukuzawa Yukichi on his first trip to Europe, as he recalled in his autobiography:

There were also the political parties, the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party, constantly waging a battle than nobody ever won. What did it all mean this political squabbling in a country at peace? (*taihei buji no tenka ni seiji-jō no kenka* 太平無事の天下に政治上の喧嘩) I could make neither head nor tail of it: it was unbelievable! What on earth were they doing (*nani wo shite iru no ka shiran* 何をしているのか知らん)? So-and-so eating and drinking at the same table as so-and-so, despite supposedly being enemies! I was utterly baffled. It was with much difficulty, and making gradual progress, that I finally managed to vaguely understand what it was all about; on occasions I spent between five and ten days on the most complex particularities before I felt satisfied. Such was the advantage of this visit to the West.<sup>44</sup>

50 This frenzy of discourse on the discourse of others no doubt seemed novel, or even excessive and ridiculous. In 1888 the journal *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, founded by Taguchi Ukichi, published a lengthy series of articles by Miyazaki Koshoshi under the unknown name of Aikyō Gakunin 愛卿学人. These articles, mentioned earlier in this paper, focused specifically on “*Kokumin no tomo oyobi Nipponjin*”, and more precisely, as the subtitle of the series indicated, issues 1 to 37 of *Kokumin* and issues 1 to 16 of *Nipponjin*. Despite the obviously high quality of this text, which appeared in the “Readers” section (*kisho* 寄書), the editorial team seems to have had slight misgivings, for it was preceded by a brief unsigned preamble, perhaps written by Taguchi Ukichi himself:

Recently, in Japanese literary circles and society, no-one is superior in the art of criticism to *Kokumin no tomo* and *Nipponjin*. But here suddenly is a scholar who in turn has made these journals the object of his criticism. We should fear what the future may hold. Who knows if tomorrow someone might appear and take this scholar as the object of their criticism?

近日日本の文壇社会に於て批評の術に長ずるもの国民之友と日本人に過ぐるなかるべし然るに今また之を批評するの一学人を出たせり誠に後世恐るべきなり焉ぞ将来此学人を批評するの人を出さざるを知らんや

51 Reading between the lines, is it not the danger of the explosion in criticism, of the metadiscourse spiral, that is exposed here, just as modern criticism was emerging?

52 Thus, what *Kokumin no tomo*’s “Announcement” of its new layout dramatically demonstrated was the establishment of the journal as a separate medium, one clearly distinct from both the newspaper and the book, and which, through its characteristic internal structure, established its own unique relationship with reality, time and readers.

53 More specifically, the conceptual endeavour undertaken by this journal, followed by many others, aimed essentially to create the intellectual conditions conducive to the birth and development of a genuine public sphere which, as we saw, was also encouraged by external circumstances. It devised a format that enabled it to assert its own positions and standpoints, listen to and welcome other voices – famous or anonymous –, provide information and analysis, and finally take part in dialogue with other periodicals and book authors by establishing, for the first time in Japan, a section specifically devoted to criticism. It proposed a kind of polyphony and plurality of approaches to reality which surely reflected if not an expectation, at least a certain maturing on behalf of Japanese society. There can be no other explanation for its stunning success.

54 Finally, in the comprehensive outlook of a journal that strove to encompass every aspect of reality, the role of a “Criticism” section appears to lie at the confluence of several requirements. Firstly, it responded to the desire to distinguish or separate – the true from the false, the beautiful from the ugly, the fair from the unfair – which corresponded to a deep-seated intellectual, political and moral need in modern Japan, embodied by the word “*hyōron*”, or critical analysis in general, of which reviews (*hihyō*) were simply one element. It further conveyed the desire to develop and maintain the public sphere as a theatre for debate by ensuring a revival or a kind of second life for books and periodical texts, which thus immediately entered into an interplay of questioning, answers and commentary. Furthermore, in a society where the movement of people, things and information seemed to be accelerating, the drive to keep abreast with current affairs found a precious ally in criticism thanks to its desire to keep apace with the publishing industry and the press. Finally, in a period that saw the volume of printed material skyrocket, criticism provided a vital service for readers by pre-screening new material, thus conferring a new responsibility on the field.

55 Before we move on from *Kokumin no tomo*, let us remember that its promoter Tokutomi Iichirō 徳富猪一郎, known by his pen name Sohō, was born into a warrior



family in Higo Province, in the Minamata region, in 1867. He grew up in the intellectual-political atmosphere encouraged by the highly pragmatic figure Yokoi Shōnan 横井小楠 (1809-1869), related to the family through marriage, who was a major player in the events surrounding the collapse of the *bakufu* and the Meiji Restoration. Having studied the Chinese classics, in addition to English, from a very young age, he then embraced Christianity in 1876. He studied at Dōshisha 同志社, a school founded in Kyoto by Niijima Jō 新島襄 (1843-1890), and is said to have decided to become a journalist during this period. He embarked on this career in 1881, amidst the turmoil of the Freedom and People's Rights Movement, by contributing to a newspaper in the Kumamoto region. At the same time he entered the local political scene and went on lecture tours. He also opened a private school. He began publishing his first essays in the national press from 1884, two of which attracted much attention: “Daijūkyū seiki Nihon no seinen oyobi sono kyōiku” 第十九世紀日本の青年及其教育 (The Youth of 19th-Century Japan and their Education, 1885)<sup>45</sup> and above all, *Shōrai no Nihon* 将来之日本 (The Future Japan, 1886), a slim opusculé published by Tōkyō keizai zasshisha, which enjoyed great success throughout the country.

56 Sohō moved to Tokyo in 1887 where he founded the company Min'yūsha, responsible for the immensely successful *Kokumin no tomo*. He was just twenty-five years old at the time. He soon followed this by launching the newspaper *Kokumin shinbun* 国民新聞 (The Nation) and other journals such as *Katei zasshi* 家庭雑誌 (The Home Journal) and an English-language version of *Kokumin no tomo* entitled *The Far East*.

57 An intellectual of great merit, Tokutomi Sohō elected the press as his main sphere of activity, both as a means of educating the people and a weapon, but also a field to be developed in itself, because the circulation of ideas and information was essential to the existence of a public sphere.<sup>46</sup> He nonetheless maintained his fundamental connection to books and that same year, in 1887, published his own long essay on a then-popular genre, “Kinrai ryūkō no seiji shōsetsu wo hyō su” 近来流行の政治小説を評す (A Criticism of the Political Novels Recently in Vogue). He was thus, in more ways than one, a founding figure and protector of modern Japanese criticism.

## Advocacy for a cruel criticism: Takada Hanpō (1886)

58 In reality it was in February 1886, eighteen months before *Kokumin no tomo* introduced its criticism section, that the text considered to be the first literary critique in Japan was published. The text reviewed was a novel by Tsubouchi Shōyō entitled *Ichidoku santan – Tōsei shosei katagi* 一読三歎当世書生氣質 (The Characters of Students Today: Read Once and Sigh Thrice).

59 This analysis, simply called “*Tōsei shosei katagi no hihyō*” 『当世書生氣質』の批評 (A Review of *The Characters of Students Today*), was written by one Hanpō Koji 半峰居士. Behind this name lurked a prominent figure: Takada Sanae 高田早苗 (1860-1938), sometimes described as the “founding ancestor of criticism” (*hihyō no ganso* 批評の元祖) in Japan due to this very text.

60 The son of wealthy farmers and grandson of national studies scholar Oyamada Tomokiyo 小山田与清 (1783-1847),<sup>47</sup> Takada Sanae entered higher education in 1876 at the Kaisei Gakkō 開成学校 before continuing at the University of Tokyo, founded in 1877. There, he studied political science and specialised in the British Constitution. As a matter of fact his fellow students included Tsubouchi Yūzō (Shōyō), who Takada apparently introduced to the charms of English literature.

61 Takada's activities were protean in nature. In addition to his work as a constitutional lawyer he wrote the first book on rhetoric in the modern sense to be published in Japan, *Bijigaku* 美辞学 (Rhetoric, 1889). He also played a decisive role in the field of

journalism,<sup>48</sup> being appointed editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Yomiuri shinbun* 読売新聞 in 1887. He was behind the hiring of Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴 (1867-1947) and Ozaki Kōyō 尾崎紅葉 (1867-1903), and encouraged the publication of translations by Mori Ōgai 森鷗外 (1862-1922) following his return from Germany; in other words, he made the paper into the “literary newspaper” (*bungaku shinbun* 文学新聞) it was sometimes described as at the time. Takada Sanae was also one of the founders of the Tokyo Technical College (Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō 東京専門学校) in 1882 – renamed Waseda University 早稲田大学 in 1902 – alongside Ōkuma Shigenobu 大隈重信 (1838-1922) and Ono Azusa 小野梓 (1852-1886). In fact, he served as its president on several occasions until the 1920s. This did not prevent him from having a busy political career, for he was elected as a member of parliament six times beginning in 1890 and served as education minister in a cabinet headed by Ōkuma Shigenobu.

62 More than simply the eclecticism of one individual, this convergence of seemingly diverse interests and spheres of activity – literature, theoretical reflection, press, education, politics –, does it not perfectly embody the new intellectual space that was taking shape during the Meiji era and which was one of the conditions for the development of criticism?

63 “A Review of *The Characters of Students Today*” was published in February 1886, in three instalments, in *Chūō gakujutsu zasshi* 中央學術雜誌 (Central Academic Journal). This publication run by professors and students from the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō had a limited circulation but published decisive texts in the intellectual history of modern Japan, including extracts from Tsubouchi Shōyō’s *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓 (The Essence of the Novel, 1885-1886) and the essay “Shōsetsu sōron” 小説総論 (General Theory of the Novel, 1886) by Futabatei Shimei.

64 The novel reviewed by Takada had enjoyed great success since its publication one year earlier, in separate instalments, between January 1885 and January 1886. Analysing in retrospect the reasons for such a positive reception by the general public, Uchida Roan 内田魯庵 (1868-1929), one of modern criticism’s leading lights, played down the specific qualities of the work and listed other elements that were almost more important in his eyes than its artistic qualities: the fact that this novel – signed Harunoya Oboro – was widely known to be the work of an arts graduate from the prestigious Imperial University, at a time when the novel was still considered a form of second-rate entertainment; the simultaneous publication of the highbrow essay *Shōsetsu shinzui* by Tsubouchi Yūzō, further highlighting the contrastive combination of two supposedly segregated worlds and thus eliciting surprise and expectations; finally, the publication of what he called the “interminable critique” (*naganagashii hiyō* 長々しい批評) of Takada Hanpō.

65 That same year, in 1886, Takada wrote critiques of two other important contemporary texts: a vast political novel, *Kajin no kigū* 佳人之奇遇 (Strange Encounters with Beautiful Women, 1885-1896) by Tōkai sanshi 東海散士 (1852-1922), and a daring essay by Taguchi Ukichi, the founder of *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, entitled *Nihon no ishō oyobi jōkō* 日本の意匠及び情交 (Forms of Love in Japan, 1886). He considered the critiquing of literary works, and in particular novels, to be truly a task of the utmost importance. And in the course of doing so he demonstrated the soundness of his choices.

66 A detailed examination of his extremely long critique of Tsubouchi’s<sup>49</sup> novel is not possible; however, what interests us in particular is the passage at the beginning of Takada Hanpō’s text devoted to the subject of criticism in general, and more specifically its necessity, task and responsibility:<sup>50</sup>

Criticism in China favours praise (*sanbi* 讚美); that of Westerners the attack (*shishō* 刺衝). Books by Chinese authors thus frequently enjoy critical appraisals written by wise men who heap praise upon them, whilst works by Westerners are unable to resist the onslaughts of critics and pitifully fall victim to these devourers of books. And thinking about it further, not only does the

Chinese tendency to give praise (*Shinajin no sanbi shugi* 支那人の讚美主義) often turn to flattery (*ten'yu* 諂諛), it fails to reveal the true power of criticism (*hihyō no jikkō* 批評の実効). When such critiques are brief (*ryaku naru* 略なる) they often content themselves with simply stringing together fine-sounding words and praising the author; when they are detailed (*shō naru* 詳なる) they limit themselves to unearthing subtle and difficult-to-know points, or highlighting essential and difficult-to-perceive points: this is none other than “commentary” (*konmentari* コメントラリー) or gloss (*chūshaku* 註釈). Yet the fundamental role of criticism is to hew the stone (*hihyō no yō wa sessa ni ari* 批評の要は切磋に在り). The fundamental role of criticism is to polish the diamond (*hihyō no yō wa takuma ni ari* 批評の要は琢磨に在り). Western critics, who often write with a scathing pen (*sen'ei naru mōei* 尖鋭なる毛穎), frequently appear to be extremely cruel (*hanahada koku naru* 甚た酷なる), as if they harboured some inextinguishable grudge (*enkon* 怨恨) against young writers, but they can be said to carry out their task to the full (*hihyōka no shokubun wo tsukushitaru* 批評家の職分を尽したる). When we think about it, the reason why Western Letters progress rapidly, day by day, mirroring the progress of the world (*yo no naka no shinpō ni tomonōte* 世の中の進歩に伴ふて) and without falling behind, is that Western critics carry out their task without idleness, giving credit where it is due and disparaging those who deserve it without reserve. And if Far Eastern Letters appear to stagnate and decline (*shunjun taiho* 逡巡退歩), to weaken and grow lethargic, it is because critics in this field remain idle and bear the responsibility for unnecessarily reeling out empty flatteries (*ten'yu no moji wo roretsu shite* 諂諛の文字を臚烈して).

67 This text draws on a caricatured antithesis established between Chinese criticism and Western criticism, the former being characterised by its servility, the latter by its ferocity. From a historical point of view Hanpō's observations contain little objective truth, since there was nothing particularly servile about “poetry talks” (Ch. *shihua*, J. *shiwā*) for example – the main form of poetry criticism on the continent –, while one need only re-read certain passages from *Illusions perdues* to be enlightened as to nineteenth-century practices in French literary journalism. It may be true, however, *a contrario*, that the golden age of *shihua* lay in the eighteenth century with works like *Suiyuan shihua* 隨園詩話 (Poetry Talks from Suiyuan) by Yuan Mei 袁枚 (1716-1798). The genre subsequently fell into decline and saw itself “disparaged for its lack of rigour, lack of analysis and vague notions”,<sup>51</sup> in particular as Chinese intellectuals came to adopt Western literary concepts. Similarly, the emergence of high calibre and exacting critics like Sainte-Beuve and Taine in France, and Poe, Whitman, Hawthorne or Melville in the United States, to cite but a few, may explain Hanpō's biased perception.

68 In reality, the essayist's insistence on stressing the ferocity of Western criticism, as opposed to the supposed laxness of Chinese critics, should no doubt be interpreted essentially as a demand for criticism to be impartial. Indeed, the value of criticism is undermined if there is any hint of it being subservient to external powers, in other words to pressures of a financial, institutional or friendly nature. In the remainder of his text Hanpō devoted several pages to justifying his critique of a text whose author, Shōyō, was a friend. For him, the critic's pen had a duty to be “objective and impartial” (*kōmei seidai* 公明正大).<sup>52</sup>

69 This demand for impartiality must no doubt be interpreted in a context where, through a lack of a truly independent and solidly established field of criticism, all that existed were thinly disguised adverts in the form of laudatory paragraphs, or in any case, in a context in which the sudden growth of the publishing industry had intensified commercial competition, leading to increasingly aggressive advertising practices. Tokutomi Sohō's description of the literary world of the period, in an article written on the role of the journal *Shuppan geppyō* in November 1887, is enlightening on the subject:

I believe that circumstances have recently become conducive to tackling the bad habits of the literary world (*bungaku sekai no akushū* 文学世界の悪習), boldly

and without caution, and putting fear into manuscript wholesalers (*oroshiuribito* 卸売人) and book manufacturers (*shoseki seizōsha* 書籍製造者). Indeed, the literary world of our country resembles the world of the night parade of one hundred demons (*hyakki yagyō no sekai* 百鬼夜行の世界), and for the rest of us, it is exceptionally rare when faced with a new publication not to experience a very strange sensation (*totsutotsu kaiji* 咄咄怪事). *Shuppan geppyō* will now take responsibility for being for its readers the perfectly smooth mirror that reveals the demons (*shōma-kyō* 照魔鏡).<sup>53</sup>

70 Was Sohō's description exaggerated? Were his radical suspicions justified? What is certain in any case is that the theme of collusion or the indulgence of critics – or, conversely, the rancour of certain others – is omnipresent in texts where criticism was attempting to establish its autonomy. In this way, as we will recall, *Kokumin no tomo* prided itself on proposing “frank” reviews (*chokuhitsu shitaru* 直筆シタル) in its “Criticism” section, or *Shuppan geppyō*<sup>54</sup> stressed its intention to offer fair and impartial reviews (*kōhei mushi no hihyō* 公平無私の批評) of recent publications and important older works, to contribute to the development of the world of books (*chojutsu shakai no shinpo* 著述社会の進歩), as well as establish the true value of literary works (*choshō no shinka* 著書の真価) and work for the benefit of its readers (*kōdokusha no ben'eki* 購読者の便益).

71 Beyond the controversial, and somewhat anecdotal, denunciation of dubious literary practices, with all the pettiness, jealousy and powerlessness that came with them, the assertion of criticism's duty to act with integrity transcended the moral sphere to attain another level. Indeed, visible behind this obligation for integrity were both a duty to combat immorality and a demand for intellectual independence. Journals and criticism thus seemed to be working hand in hand to present a united front against the world of publishers and traders. The close relationship they could hope to establish with their loyal readers – subscribers or otherwise – thus provided them with the conditions for their autonomous existence: legitimacy and a *raison d'être*.

72 In using China as a foil – perhaps with a certain amount of bad faith –,<sup>55</sup> Hanpō did not claim to provide a historical and cultural analysis of Chinese criticism. Beyond his accusations of indulgence and idleness he strove to understand and demonstrate what he called the “true power of criticism” (*hihyō no jikkō* 批評の実効), which in his eyes resided neither in purely rhetorical variations nor in erudition. The cruelty he demanded from criticism, and which he felt he had found in the ferocity of Western critics, should not be interpreted solely in psychological or social terms. It corresponded to a quest for a distinct identity for a criticism that truly fulfilled its role.

73 Although Hanpō postulated and desired an autonomous criticism, he still struggled to clearly define its contours. He used an image taken from the *Shijing* 詩經 (Classic of Poetry) and borrowed from stonemasonry: “hewing the stone” (*sessha* 切磋), and “polishing the diamond” (*takuma* 琢磨). This imagery is ambiguous since when used together these terms form a set expression meaning “collective emulation”, “mutual encouragement to intellectual and moral effort”, but also have a wealth of evocative connotations. Although the use of a chisel or file inherently suggests a certain cruelty, the role of stone-cutter or jeweller bestows on the critic an essential, albeit poorly defined, role in the reception, and moreover, the accomplishment of a work. In other words, Hanpō was without doubt calling for a change, a revolution even, in reading.

74 Thus, beyond this ambivalent expression full of imagery, at once vague and suggestive, conventional and daring, the essence of Hanpō's argument is that criticism had a duty. In fact, the Japanese term employed is extremely evocative: “*shokubun*” 職分 signifies an individual's “share of the work”, to be carried out to the full (*shokubun wo tsukusu* 職分を尽くす),<sup>56</sup> something the Chinese critics accused of idleness failed to do (*shokubun wo okotaru* 職分を怠る). This desire to define the scope of a particular discipline, profession or institution was fundamental to the momentous effort to restructure views, feelings and actions that characterised the Meiji era. Thus this term



“*shokubun*” frequently appears in *Gakumon no susume* 学問のすすめ (Encouragement to Learning, 1872-1876) by Fukuzawa Yukichi,<sup>57</sup> who believed that everyone – farmers, tradesmen, scholars, or more generally the people, the nation, the government, or even mankind – had a role to fulfil. Similarly, in *Shōsetsu shinzui* Tsubouchi Shōyō attempted to define both the “object of the novel” (*shōsetsu no shunō* 小説の主脳) and the “novelist’s duty” (*shōsetsuka no tsutome* 小説家の務). Ōgai, as we will see shortly, also wanted to define the “home territory” (*honryō* 本領) of the journal he founded in 1889, *Shigarami zōshi*; while Masaoka Shiki, in his 1895 work *Haikai taigai*, strove to illustrate what “distinguished” (*kubetsu* 区別) the *haiku* from other forms of literature. Any number of examples could be cited, so essential was this desire to delimit, characterise and define the specificity of new fields.<sup>58</sup>

75 To return to criticism, Ōgai would also declare some time later, in 1900, in *Ōgai gyoshi to wa ta zo* 鷗外漁史とは誰ぞ (Who is Ōgai Gyoshi?) that:

In our age of specialisation (*bungyō no yo no naka* 分業の世の中), the vocation of critic has become a profession in its own right (*hitotsu no shokugyō* 一の職業), [...].<sup>59</sup>

76 A little further on in this text he spoke of the field’s “boundaries” (*kyōkai* 境界). The line had remained unchanged since Hanpō’s first efforts.

77 Finally, as far as Hanpō was concerned, although there was still no clearly established definition of criticism, the desire to create an existence for it was obvious and the role assigned to it clear. Criticism was to be the ultimate instrument for advancing Far Eastern Letters. Hanpō’s world view was firmly focused on the future, both haunted by a fear of stagnation and decline, and fascinated by the potential for progress. Much more than the quality of his conceptual thought, it was his willingness to play an active role in his history that gave his call for cruelty in criticism its strength and explained his faith in its supposed effectiveness.

78 In order to assess both the novelty and impact of this new requirement, as well as the limits of the reasoning behind it, it is useful to remember that in January 1886 the literary revolution of modern Japan had barely begun. Only poetry, with the Anthology of New-Style Poetry (*Shintaishi shō* 新体詩抄) by Toyama Masakazu 外山正一, Yatabe Ryōkichi 矢田部良吉 and Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎, published in 1882, had undertaken any kind of reform. The Society for Theatre Reform (*Engeki kairyōkai* 演劇改良会) was only founded in August 1886. As for the novel, it was in the midst of a boom in political novels and thanks to Tsubouchi’s various activities had recently experienced its first shake-up. Similarly, if Hanpō reasoned in terms of Far Eastern Letters and not Japanese literature – which he hoped to see distinguish and differentiate itself –, it is simply because the concept of “national literature” had not yet taken shape in Japan.<sup>60</sup> Perhaps the same could even be said of the notion of “literature” itself, at least in the modern sense of the word.

79 In other words, it is no surprise that Hanpō’s contribution was both energetic and simplistic. It did not come after the fact but rather, on the contrary, was one of the elements that heralded the transformations to come. His text was definitely published in 1886, and not in 1890 like *Maihime* or *Nihon bungakushi*.

## In praise of the gardener-critic: Ōnishi Hajime (1888)

80 On 4 May 1888, an essay by one Seidō Koji 西堂居士, bearing the title “Essay on Criticism” (*Hihyōron* 批評論), appeared in issue 21 of *Kokumin no tomo*, eight months after the creation of its “Criticism” section. It is credited with being the first discussion paper published in Japan to be devoted entirely to the field.



81 Its twenty-four-year-old author, Ōnishi Hajime 大西祝 (1864-1900), was born into a family of Christian samurai and at a very young age entered the private denominational school Dōshisha Eigakkō 同志社英学校, founded in Kyoto in 1875 by Nijima Jō. He remained there for seven years from 1877 to 1884 and mixed, among others, with Tokutomi Sohō, one year his senior, who studied there from 1876 to 1880. Having completed the general curriculum (*futsūka* 普通科), in 1881 Ōnishi turned to theology (*shingakuka* 神学科). He was aged seventeen. In 1885 he went to Tokyo to study for entrance to the University of Tokyo. He was accepted into the Faculty of Letters, then the Department of Philosophy the following year. From this period onwards he published a large number of articles in Christian journals,<sup>61</sup> including “Waka ni shūkyō nashi” 和歌に宗教なし (There is no Religion in *Waka*). Having graduated in 1889 he became a teacher at the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (the future Waseda), where he was responsible for its philosophy classes. For eight years, alongside Tsubouchi Shōyō, he was one of the central figures of the Faculty of Letters at this prestigious establishment, from where he exerted a strong intellectual and moral influence. Having also entered the graduate school (Daigakuin 大学院) of the Imperial University, he undertook research in both German idealism and British empiricism. In order to deepen his understanding of them he moved to Europe in 1898, studying at Jena, Leipzig and Heidelberg. He fell seriously ill just the following year and returned to Japan to die, in 1900, aged thirty-six, though not without having been awarded his PhD.<sup>62</sup> His complete works were compiled and edited by his friends and students in 1903.

82 The intellectual gifts of Ōnishi Hajime – “Japan’s first specialist in Kant”, as he was sometimes referred to – were dazzling. His premature death was fraught with consequences for the Japanese philosophical scene, which for many years remained under the iron rule of the formidable Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 (1855-1944), with whom Ōnishi had previously crossed swords. Nevertheless, it is on one single aspect of his thinking focused essentially on a dialogue between art and Christianity that I will concentrate on here. As the author Shimazaki Tōson 島崎藤村 (1872-1943) would later write, Ōnishi Hajime was “the brilliant young philosopher who can be described as being the first to have elevated the meaning of the word criticism” (*hajimete hihyō to iu mono no imi wo takameta to mo iieru ano shōsō na tetsugakusha* 初めて批評といふものの意味を高めたとも言ひ得るあの少壮な哲学者)<sup>63</sup>.

83 In the spring of 1888, Ōnishi was acutely aware of the change that had taken place in the Japanese public sphere in the preceding months. He wrote:

It is logical that people have come to understand the need for criticism (*hihyō no hitsuyō* 批評の必要). Over the past two years it seems that nothing has so transformed the pages of newspapers and journals than the columns devoted to criticism. Each time a novel appears in translation, newspapers and journals inevitably provide a critical review of varying length. And there are even journalists to meticulously review the short-lived opuscles that appear in the morning and are gone by the evening. There is even a monthly journal that specialises in criticism. Thus, in the course of this fashion for criticism (*hihyō no ryūkō* 批評の流行) there are people who perform rapid feats of magic (*majinai* 神験術), transforming themselves and assuming the guise of a critic (*hihyōka to narisumasu* 批評家となりすます).<sup>64</sup>

84 Without denying himself a certain irony with regards what was equally a “fashion”, with its inherent abuses, Ōnishi identified a number of converging circumstances that eloquently illustrated the flourishing of criticism, noting for example the existence of a journal that irresistibly brings to mind *Shuppan geppyō*. However, far from restricting himself to denouncing the absurdities of this nascent criticism, he undertook – on a much more sophisticated and conceptual level than Hanpō – to endow it with a legitimacy. I propose to examine point by point the extremely well-structured argument he expounded in “Creation and Criticism” (*Sōsaku to hihyō* 創作と批評).

85 Ōnishi began by affirming the rarity of good critics and took the opportunity to

propose an initial definition:

High quality critiques (*meihyō* 名評) are almost as difficult to find as high quality works. Among the reviews of *Hamlet*, for example, there is one by Goethe. And the quality of his critique plunged Macaulay<sup>65</sup> into despair and admiration. However, it took 200 years for Shakespeare to find Goethe. Well! If literary or artistic creation (*bungaku oyobi bijutsu-jō no sōsaku* 文学及美術上の創作) is chiefly an act of construction (*kekōteki no sayō* 結構的作用), revealing the aesthetic heart of this construction thanks to a discerning and analytical eye (*rikaiteki no keigan wo motte sono kekō no myōsho wo ugatsu* 理解的の慧眼を以て其結構の妙処を穿つ), such is the critic's true vocation (*hihyōka no tokui* 批評家の得意).

86 Ōnishi went on to declare that an incompatibility existed between the creator and the critic, who each possessed their own specific gift:

Since the creator and the critic possess talents of a somewhat different nature (*sukoburu sono sainō no omomuki wo koto ni suru* 頗る其才能の趣を異にする), it is extremely difficult, and virtually unimaginable, to find both skills combined to a high degree within one single individual. Rare are those men of the past who combined both talents, such as Goethe or Lessing. When Byron composed his poems, his rhythm was so melodious, his verse so powerful that there seems to be a kind of magic at work, but when he tried to write critiques of poetry or prose, while concealing his true feelings, his words are singularly weak, everything is terrible. His poems are the work of an angel; his reflection that of a three-year-old.

87 Ōnishi then explained the specific characteristics of poetic genius and critical genius, eventually concluding that the relationships between poets and critics were unique and not interchangeable:

The poet composes because his poetic genius is set in motion, (*shisai ugoku ga yue ni shijin utau* 詩才動くが故に詩人歌ふ), without necessarily knowing where it comes from. The poet often captures Beauty intuitively (*bimyō wo chokkaku su* 美妙を直覚す). It is the critic who understands this (*kore wo rikai suru mono wa hihyōka nari* 之を理解する者は批評家なり). The poet is like a person who communicates with the gods: without himself understanding the principle, he discovers the beauty of the cosmos and extracts the truth. It is the critic who understands the principle (*ri* 理) of this for the poet. The poet captures beauty and places it at the heart of his work. Naturally he sees the beauty of his work. But he is not always capable of interpreting the reasons for this beauty (*sono bi taru riyū* 其美たる理由). It is the critic who explains them. Thus, it can be said that the poet understands nature, and the critic understands the poet (*hihyōka wa shijin wo kai suru mono* 批評家は詩人を解する者). Consequently, the relationship between one particular poet and his critic does not generally make it possible to understand that between another poet and his critic.

88 Ōnishi then developed his argument by demonstrating that the critic was not always in the rearguard of poetic creation, but on occasions may also find himself in the vanguard:

The critic is therefore placed in a position at the rear (*shingari* 殿) of the creator, but has often also had the honour of being a forerunner (*senku to naru no eiyo* 先駆となるの榮譽). For a high quality critique does not always follow a high quality piece of work; it also has the power to bring about future masterpieces (*mirai no meisaku wo yūin suru no chikara* 未来の名作を誘引するの力). Criticism is not required merely to look back to the past; it also has the ability to orchestrate the future (*hihyō wa tada ni ōji wo kaerimiru ni tomarazu, mata shōrai wo shiki suru no chikara ari* 批評は常に往時を顧るに止まらず、又将来を指揮するの力あり).

89 This ability of the critic to prepare the ground for creation is based on the idea that

history is characterised by an alternation between periods of creation and periods of criticism, and that the two must not be confused:

Although he himself does not create, the critic can act as a mentor to the writers of the future (*kōsei no sōsakuka ni oshiete* 後世の作家に教へて) and indicate promising paths to tread (*nozomi aru no kōro wo torashimuru* 望あるの行路を取るらしむる); moreover, since in literary history periods of creation and periods of criticism differ entirely in their nature (*bungaku no rekishi ni oite sōsaku no jidai to hihiyō no jidai to wa sukoburu sono omomuki wo koto ni suru* 文学の歴史に於て創作の時代と批評の時代とは頗る其の趣を異にする), when a country's literature is in the midst of a period of criticism, creation is not desirable (*ikkoku no bungaku, moshi hihiyō no jidai ni aru toki wa sōsaku wa aete nozomu bekarazu* 一国の文学、若し批評の時代にある時は創作は敢て望む可からず). It is better to carry out preparations (*mushiro kore ga tame ni junbi wo nasu beshi* 寧ろ之が為に準備を為すべし).

90 Just as it would be a mistake to choose the path of creation during a period of criticism, it would be unwise to force the course of events. A period of creation can only come about when certain conditions are met:

A period of creation does not appear on demand (*sōsaku no jidai wa maneite tadachi ni kuru mono ni arazu* 創作の時代は招て直に来る者にあらず). Its appearance is conditioned by the situation of the entire nation (*sono kuru ya fukaku kokka hyappan no jōkyō ni in'en su* 其来るや深く国家百般の情況に因縁す). Many factors explain the periods of creation we have witnessed in the past – the Elizabethan era in English literature or the Goethe and Schiller period in German literature, for example –, but when an entire nation breathes new ideas and embarks on energetic spiritual exercise (*ippan no kokumin, shinsen no shisō wo kokyūshi, kappatsu naru seishinteki no undō wo hajimuru ni oite wa* 一般の国民、新鮮の思想を呼吸し、活発なる精神的の運動を始むるに於ては), its literature can then hope to come closer to a period of creation.

91 In such circumstances the critic's role is clearly defined: to prepare for the future during periods of criticism. His role is thus that of an obstetrician, or more precisely, a gardener of history:

Therefore, it is the critic who differentiates and critiques the many and varied ideas crisscrossing society, reveals their true worth and in this way precedes the world of ideas (*kono toki ni atari shakai ni hihon suru shuju zatta no shisō wo hanbetsu hihiyō shite sono shinka wo akiraka ni shi motte tōji no shisōkai ni sakidatsu mono wa kedashi hihiyōka nari* 此時に当り社会に飛奔する種々雑多の思想を判別批評して其真価を明にし以て当時の思想界に先立つ者は蓋し批評家なり). It is the critic who cuts the grass, ploughs the earth, plants the seeds and prepares for the emergence of the beauties of tomorrow's civilisation (*kono toki ni atari kusa wo kiri tsuchi wo kaeshi shushi wo kudashite motte shōrai no bunka wo manekikitasu mono wa kedashi hihiyōka nari* 此時に当り草を耨り土を反し種子を下して以て将来の文華を招き来す者は蓋し批評家なり). The speed or slowness with which they appear, and the conditions for their appearance, greatly depend on the criticism that preceded them. These two elements are intimately linked: this must be understood.

92 It would be wrong, therefore, to hand out ill-considered value judgments that take umbrage with the critic. The critic's legitimacy is indisputable:

It is impossible, therefore, to separate periods of creation and criticism. It is very difficult to keep the creator and discard the critic (*hihiyōka wo sute sōsakuka wo en to suru wa jitsu ni nashigataki* 批評家を措て作家を得んとするは実に為し難き), but if one wanted to hold forth as to their respective worth, it goes without saying that the latter would be inferior to the former. Nevertheless, if in the literary world it is the creator who deserves the highest decoration, it is the critic who bestows it on him (*kedashi bungaku no sekai ni oite saikō no kunshō wo ukuru mono wa sōsakuka naredomo kore wo sazukuru mono wa hihiyōka nari* 蓋し文学の世界に於て最高の勲章を受くる者

93 The differences between the analyses of Hanpō and Ōnishi are obvious. They stem first and foremost from Ōnishi's use of a style that was partly freed from Chinese rhetoric, more concise and less allusive,<sup>66</sup> though still heavily influenced by parallelisms. Above all, this text relies on the omnipresence of an abstract vocabulary composed of a series of concepts apparently drawn from the aesthetics of Kant and Hegel, and in any case clearly developed through contact with Western philosophical theories and art history.

94 Beyond the highly abstract impression produced by Ōnishi Hajime's essay, it must be remembered that he succeeded – something that cannot be said of Hanpō – in establishing an extremely precise definition of the very nature of the critical act: “revealing, thanks to a discerning and analytical eye, the aesthetic heart of the act of construction that is literary or artistic creation”, “understanding the poet”. In other words, the critic must use applied aesthetic philosophy.

95 In addition, while Hanpō – whose eye was fixed firmly on the future, which he feared held nothing but decadence and lethargy – wanted to see criticism act as a spur nudging into literature's sides, Ōnishi's view was much more complex, less impatient and more historical, although he made no real attempt to analyse the specific circumstances of modern Japan. He was certainly concerned about the future but insisted that the course of events could not be hurried and that periods of crisis could not be rushed through. He even demanded, not without a certain jubilation, the right for criticism to rule supreme during the times that paved the way for periods of creation. This view of the critic as gardener provided Ōnishi with arguments to promote the critic's value as a “forerunner” capable of “bringing about a future masterpiece”, of “orchestrating the future”. In the name of this summary and deterministic historicism, he even went so far as to literally forbid creators to create, stating that “when a country's literature is in the midst of a period of criticism, creation is not desirable. It is better to carry out preparations”.

96 Furthermore, in contrast to Hanpō, who waved the spectre of the decadence supposedly threatening to strike down Japanese literature just as it had Chinese literature, Ōnishi demonstrated a certain optimism by seeing promise in the situation of Japan at that time, describing the entire nation as “breathing new ideas and embarking on energetic spiritual exercise”. Like many of his contemporaries, Ōnishi saw the confusion that reigned at the beginning of the second decade of Meiji as a sign of dynamic activity rather than a maelstrom perched on the edge of an abyss. The “young blood of the Meiji era” (*Meiji no wakai chi* 明治の若い血), of which Roka wrote, was full of promise. A radical change had well and truly taken place between 1886 and 1888.

97 The final marked difference between Hanpō and Ōnishi lies in the very way they viewed the role of criticism. Whereas Hanpō, as you will recall, used the image of the stoneworker or jeweller, Ōnishi referred to the art of gardening (“cuts the grass, ploughs the earth, plants the seeds and prepares for the emergence”). This divergence no doubt stemmed from the two men's differing sensibilities, yet it reveals a clear development in thinking in the space of two years. What Hanpō was asking of criticism resembled a feat of magic: he hoped to see criticism undergo a sudden transmutation, a virtually instantaneous rise in the value of Far Eastern Letters, which explains his comparison with the work of a jeweller who extracts the stone from its gangue and transforms it into a jewel. On the other hand, for someone like Ōnishi whose reasoning was based on a philosophy of history, the slow work of the gardener preparing today for the harvests of tomorrow was more meaningful. Despite everything, Ōnishi was also more precise. For him, criticism was grounded in its primary role, which was to differentiate and put in order. This would be asserted even more emphatically by Mori Ōgai.

# Criticism against chaos: Mori Ōgai (1889)

98 Despite the wildly differing fates of Tokutomi Sohō, Takada Hanpō and Ōnishi Hajime, we have seen that numerous links existed between these three men: Sohō and Ōnishi formerly attended Dōshisha together;<sup>67</sup> Hanpō and Ōnishi were colleagues at the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (alongside Tsubouchi Shōyō); by working for the *Yomiuri*, Hanpō attached the same importance to periodicals as Sohō did when he embarked on his *Kokumin no tomo* adventure.

99 In comparison to these three individuals, Mori Ōgai may seem somewhat out of place, isolated even. In any case, his personality had been shaped and matured in a slightly different context. To be precise, he was not physically present in Japan when the aforementioned revolution of the public sphere took place, the very period in which the three texts presented here were published. In fact, he had been studying in Germany since 1884 and only returned to Japan in August 1888. Furthermore, Mori Ōgai was a scientist, or more specifically a doctor specialising in hygiene, a rapidly developing discipline at that time. Finally, he was also a soldier, having enlisted in the army as a medical officer following his graduation from university.

100 And yet at the beginning of 1889, just a few short months after his return to Japan, Ōgai entered – and what a dazzling entrance it was! – Japan’s newly established public sphere, while simultaneously assuming his professional responsibilities. And he naturally formed immediate links, if not directly and personally with the three previously presented authors, at least with the institutions that employed them.

101 Accordingly, beginning in January that year he contributed several translations to Takada Hanpō’s *Yomiuri shinbun*, including “Shōsetsuron” 小説論 (Essay on the Novel), in which he expounded the theories behind Zola’s experimental novel, and a Japanese version of the play *El Alcalde de Zalamea* by Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, which he wrote with his younger brother, entitled *Shirabe wa takashi gitarura no hitofushi* 調高矣洋絃一曲 (A Guitar Melody).

102 In April he began to contribute regularly to *Kokumin no tomo*, publishing work virtually every month until 1892. His texts were extremely varied: there were literary essays such as “Bungaku to shizen’ wo yomu” 「文学と自然」を読む (Reading “Literature and Nature”); political and social opinion pieces including “Daigaku no jiyū wo ron zu” 大学の自由を論ず (Essay on the Freedom of Universities) and “Shiku kaisei ronryaku” 市区改正論略 (Brief Essay on Urban Reform); novels such as *Jishin* 地震, a translation of *Das Erdbeben in Chili* by Heinrich von Kleist, or the famous *Maihime* 舞姫 (The Dancing Girl), published in the January 1890 issue; and even poetry, to which I will return later. In January 1900, in *Ōgai gyoshi to wa ta zo* 鷗外漁史とは誰ぞ (Who is Ōgai Gyoshi?), Ōgai recalled his links with Sohō and his previously described entrance into the public sphere:

Being an inveterate reader, I was delighted to have friends who loved books and to be able to discuss them with them. One day, the editor-in-chief of *Kokumin no tomo*, my friend Tokutomi Ichirō [Sohō], came up with the idea of asking me to share these discussions with the public (*yo no kataru tokoro wo kōshū ni shōkai shiyō to omoitaretete* 予の語る所を公衆に紹介しやうと思ひ立たれて) [...]. This was how I came to switch from speaking in a private capacity to speaking in a public one, and how Ōgai Gyoshi was born.<sup>68</sup> Then one after the other newspapers and journals in Tokyo asked me to write for them (*sorekara Tōkyō no shinbun zasshi ga, kare mo kore mo yo wo hite katarashimeta* それから東京の新聞雑誌が、彼も此も予を延いて語らしめた). By nature I am quite talkative, even in private, as long as an audience presents itself at the right time, and during that period I addressed the public at length (*kōshū ni tai shite shabetta* 公衆に対して饒舌つた). In the beginning I was in demand from newspapers and journals, but as time went by they became irritated with my



verbooseness and complained that my boasting and interminable sermons were a nuisance (*sō daigen sōgo serarete wa komaru to ka, sō naga-dangi wo serarete wa komaru to ka itte, yo no shaberu ni hekieki shita* さう大言壮語せられては困るとか、さう長談義をせられては困るとか云つて、予の饒舌るに辟易した).<sup>69</sup>

103 Although there is no evidence of a direct link between Ōgai and Ōnishi, it must of course be pointed out that between 1891 and 1893, Ōgai was locked in a heated debate on aesthetics with Tsubouchi Shōyō, and thus with the Tōkyō Senmon Gakkō (Waseda) where Ōnishi and Hanpō also played a leading role, which was immortalised as the “submerged ideals debate” (*botsurisō ronsō* 没理想論争). Although Shōyō and Ōgai may appear to have been opponents during this period, in reality they were on the same side, fighting to introduce literary and aesthetic debates into the public arena. This was clearly understood by public opinion at the time, for as Ōgai himself pointed out in *Ōgai gyoshi to wa ta zo*,<sup>70</sup> the names of these two literary giants together came to symbolise this era of criticism.

104 Not content with merely writing, Ōgai also took an active role in creating this public sphere by founding journals. Without listing all those he created and supported throughout his lifetime, I will simply point out that as early as March 1889 he founded *Eisei shinshi* 衛生新誌 (New Journal of Hygiene), followed in January 1890 by *Iji shinron* 医事新論 (New Medicine). He then merged these two titles in September that same year to create *Eisei ryōbyōshi* 衛生療病志 (Journal of Hygiene and Treatment). In the field of interest to us here, in October 1889 Mori Ōgai founded a journal whose title is – too often – mutilated and mangled:<sup>71</sup> *Bungaku hyōron – Shigarami zōshi* 文學評論志からミ草紙 (Literary Criticism – *The Weir*). In total fifty-nine issues were published<sup>72</sup> over almost five years, until Mori Ōgai went abroad for the Sino-Japanese War in 1894. Although *Shuppan geppyō* was the first journal devoted to critically reviewing recent publications (and older works) from all fields, *Shigarami zōshi* was the first to specialise, as its full title indicates, in literary criticism. In *Ōgai gyoshi to wa ta zo*, Ōgai explained how the journal came into existence following his aforementioned problems with newspaper and journal publishers:

This situation did nothing to quell my habit of addressing the public and eventually I came to think that I need not wait for people to drag me up to the rostrum, that I should set up my own to address the public. I called it *Shigarami zōshi*.<sup>73</sup>

105 The journal was published by Shinseisha<sup>74</sup> 新声社 (New Voices Society), in other words the group of translators behind the anthology of translated poems *Omokage* 於母影 (Reminiscences), published in August 1889 in the form of a summer supplement (*kaki furoku* 夏期付録) to none other than *Kokumin no tomo*. This anthology, which introduced the Japanese public to a range of European poets such as Byron, Goethe and Heine, was an unexpected commercial success and the money earned from translating poetry was reinvested without further ado into a journal on literary criticism!<sup>75</sup>

106 Apart from Ōgai – who requires no further introduction and who, as we have seen, had begun to work simultaneously as a translator, novelist, critic and polemicist –, who were the organisers behind this journal? Ichimura Sanjirō 市村讚次郎 (1864-1947), a sinologist, was a pioneer in the study of Oriental history. Ochiai Naobumi 落合直文 (1861-1903), a specialist in national literature and a *waka* poet, was embroiled in the debate on Japanese language and literature reform.<sup>76</sup> Inoue Michiyasu 井上通康 (1866-1941), who also specialised in national literature and was a *waka* poet, worked as an ophthalmologist.<sup>77</sup> Koganei Kimiko 小金井喜美子 (1870-1956), translator, novelist, essayist and poet, was Ōgai’s younger sister. Finally, Miki Takeji 三木竹二 – alias Mori Tokujirō 森篤次郎 (1867-1908), Ōgai’s younger brother, was a theatre lover and critic. He founded the journal *Kabuki* 歌舞伎 in 1900.

107 This small group of highly diverse individuals did not constitute a school or a movement based on shared theoretical views. It drew first and foremost on personal attachments that justified its members' respective roots in a diverse range of disciplines, the only common bond being a love of language and languages. However, this group, led by Ōgai, refused to limit itself to the task of creating and translating – without abandoning these activities of course. They felt an acute need, an urgency, that Ōgai would later explain with the greatest clarity. In 1914,<sup>78</sup> a quarter of a century later, he recalled what motivated the group's decision to call the journal *Shigarami zōshi*:

The idea was to build a weir to stem the tumultuous flood from the literary world.

*Tōtō-taru bundan no nagare ni shigarami wo kakeru to iu imi kara de atta.*  
滔々たる文壇の流に柵をかけると云ふ意味からであった。

108 “*Shigarami*” 柵, clumsily translated as “weir” or “against the current or tide”, refers in reality to structures made of intertwined bamboo and branches attached to wooden stakes placed in the middle of a watercourse to interrupt or, more precisely, to channel or regulate the flow. This metaphor is wholly in keeping with the one employed by Sohō, as you will recall,<sup>79</sup> to describe the “tumultuous” flood (*tōtō* 滔々) of publications – both men employed the same term – that characterised the year 1887.

109 Thus for Ōgai and his friends, criticism was synonymous with resisting the natural course of events. It sought to oppose, if needs be, but also to put things in order. In the first issue of his journal, Ōgai published a long text in which he defined what he considered to be “the home territory of *Shigarami zōshi*”. The first paragraphs read as follows:

When Western learning came to the East, in the beginning its content was conveyed but not its spirit.<sup>80</sup> Learning was equated with the acquisition of knowledge and the understanding of principles; technique was equated with the art of medicine and war: in other words, everyone knew that Westerners were practical (*kichi* 機智) but not that they were virtuous (*tokugi* 徳義). And even less that they had an aesthetic sense (*fūga* 風雅)! During this period, those who studied Western learning were only interested in profit (*ri* 利); they became morose if they earned nothing. Just as the precious wood used to make harps or the rare pieces of bamboo used to make flutes one day become firewood, so the tongue of the yellow ox and the flesh of the crane cannot escape the casserole. Almost everyone had taken to emulating Plato, who wanted to banish poets from the city.

Nowadays there has been a change of direction and the refined literature of the West has entered our lands along with its supreme philosophical principles (今や此方嚮は一転して、西方の優美なる文学は、その深邃なる哲理と共に我疆に入り来れり). If we consider the subdivisions of this literature we find lyrical poetry, epic poetry and drama, while the novel, which has flourished in Western Europe in recent years, is predominant, despite not belonging to any of these categories. While of course we should rejoice in the novel's popularity, given that this genre's content is indeterminate, it is populated with incompetents, capable only of aping senselessly, making an infernal racket.

In the literary circles of our country there is already a myriad of elements from the outside (我邦の文学界には、外より来れる分子、既に甚だ多し). In the past, when Buddhism arrived in Japan, it did so via retranslations from Chinese and was scarcely accompanied by Indian literature. Chinese literature alone accompanied the political education originating in that country and it greatly transformed the national style. It is true that today's men of letters include *waka* poets (歌人) and authors of Chinese poetry (詩人), masters of the national language (国文を善くするもの) and specialists of Sino-Japanese (漢文を善くするもの), those who excel in the classical style (真仮名体に長ずるもの) and those who shine in the unified language (言文一致体を得意とするもの). The result is that highly diverse aesthetic elements hailing from our own national resources, China and the West intertwine haphazardly (本国、支那、西欧の

種々の審美的分子は、此間に飛散せる). This chaotic situation cannot be borne for long (此混沌の状は、決して久しきに堪ふべきものにあらず). The rest of us understand that the period of clarification is near (余等はその澄清の期の近きにあるを知る). There is only one path that can bring about this clarification and that is criticism.<sup>81</sup>

110 What is striking about Mori Ōgai's thinking is his desire to place his analysis within the framework of a specifically and deliberately historical perspective. Whereas Hanpō looked solely towards the future, which he feared held only decadence and lethargy, and Ōnishi restricted his analysis to a somewhat abstract alternation between periods of creation and periods of criticism, and thus a somewhat mechanical dialectic between present and future, Ōgai situated his activity in the historical evolution of his country. He chose as a starting point the arrival of Western learning in Japan, which no doubt should be interpreted as the emergence of Dutch learning in the eighteenth century,<sup>82</sup> and he criticised the attitude that had subsequently endured until the beginning of the Meiji era and which consisted, in his eyes, of an instrumentalist view of the technology provided by this body of knowledge. In contrast, he noted that a change had recently taken place that had enabled the moral, but above all aesthetic, dimension of Western civilisation to be recognised. He claimed that this had led to a radical change in Japanese literature and engendered a chaotic situation that needed to be addressed.

111 In order to evaluate this chaos, Ōgai placed it in a historical context and pointed out that it was not unheard-of in a civilisation that had previously succeeded in assimilating foreign influences. In other words, he showed confidence in the course of history, which he believed would inevitably lead to a period of clarification, no matter how difficult the situation at that time. In contrast to Ōnishi, rather than seeing periods of creation and criticism as alternating automatically, Ōgai believed that criticism's role as clarifier was to offset the disorder produced by the creative ferment, as if creation and criticism were indispensable to one another.

112 The chaos of which Ōgai spoke was of course widespread, but it particularly concerned art, and especially literature, split as it was between Chinese and Japanese references on the one hand – which had long coexisted in harmony – and Western references on the other. First and foremost, the sudden rise of the novel, a genre that, despite its popularity, was held in contempt by the literary traditions of the Far East, created a kind of challenge. Indeed, explained Ōgai, while the popularity of the novel itself could not be criticised, the vague definition of this genre left the door open to imposture. Yet it is quite certain that at the very moment Ōgai was writing, the creative ferment was at its most intense, something that Saitō Ryokuu 斎藤緑雨 (1867-1904), for example, had not failed to understand when a year earlier he published his faintly mockingly titled *Eight Schools of the Novel* (*Shōsetsu hasshū* 小説八宗). And a rapid review of the literary history of this period would unreservedly corroborate Ōgai's general analysis of the “highly diverse aesthetic elements that intertwine haphazardly”.

113 Faced with this feeling of confusion, which remained with him throughout his lifetime, to the extent that he made it the subject of a 1909 lecture simply entitled *Konton* 混沌 (Chaos),<sup>83</sup> Ōgai did not give up. On the contrary, it only appeared even more essential to him that the situation be resolved. Firstly because he found chaos unbearable, but perhaps more fundamentally because he appeared to believe that a kind of natural historical process existed in which chaos would be followed by clarification. However, Ōgai was no more an idealist than he was a determinist. It appeared essential to him to make his work part of the course of history in order to play an active and enlightened role in this process and “bring about” (*itasu* 致す) this clarification. This is why he considered criticism so essential.<sup>84</sup> By definition it was the most appropriate instrument for combatting chaos and creating order. He reiterated this in a separate text from the same period entitled “Meiji nijūni-nen hihyōka no shigan” 明治二十二年批評家の詩眼 (The Poetic Appreciation of Critics in Meiji 20 [1887]):

Nothing is as essential for the evolution of literature as criticism. And yet nothing is more despised than criticism.

文学の進化には批評ほど必要なるものはあらず。されど又批評ほど畏るべきものはあらず。<sup>85</sup>

114 Moreover, the terms that he employed – “clarification, or purification” (*chōsei* 澄清), “evolution” (*shinka* 進化) – are revealing, for both belonged to the evolutionary rhetoric of social Darwinism which, as we know, was popular in Meiji-era Japan. Without dwelling unduly on this fact, let us recall that the advantage of this theory was that it allowed a Japanese people facing international conflicts to view progress as being immanent in themselves.

115 What was it that gave criticism this power to contribute towards the clarification, the decantation of chaos? The quoted text provides some clues when it speaks of the aesthetic sense of Westerners, their “refined literature” with its “supreme philosophical principles”, as well as “literary subdivisions and categories” or even the intertwining of diverse “aesthetic elements”. However, it is further on in his text that Ōgai clearly revealed his thinking. Whereas Far Eastern writers were dependent on the writing conventions set out in treatises on poetry (*karon* 歌論 and *shiron* 詩論),

Western men of letters follow the norms of poetics, itself built on the foundations of aesthetics.

西欧文学者が審美学の基址の上に築き起したる詩学を以て準繩となす。

And along the way Ōgai also pointed out that:

This is why, thanks to the publication of *Shōsetsu shinzui* by Shōyōshi and *Bijigaku* by Hanpō Koji, we can rejoice that our men of letters now have literary norms.

故に逍遙子の小説神髓、半峯居士の美辞学の出づるや、我邦操觚家の為めに此文学上の標準を得たるを賀したり。

116 These “standards” (*hyōjun* 標準) and “norms” (*junjō* 準繩)<sup>86</sup> were supplied by “poetics” (*shigaku* 詩学), and ultimately “aesthetics” (*shinbigaku* 審美学), and in Ōgai’s eyes were evidently the levers that enabled criticism to develop.<sup>87</sup> In this way it could shake off the bad reputation perpetuated by certain entrenched ideas reflected in expressions such as “*bunjin sōkei*” 文人相軽 – literally, men of letters mutually despise one another – or “*bunshi keiatsu*” 文士傾軋 – men of letters set traps for one another out of jealousy – which Ōgai cited.<sup>88</sup> This new theoretical foundation allowed criticism to fend off the persistent accusations of succumbing to personal reflections, indulgence or cruelty when assessing the work of others.

117 Ōgai’s immense confidence in the resources of aesthetics stemmed of course from his readings of German philosophy, and in particular Edouard von Hartmann (1842-1906), who he translated intensely during his time at Kokura: his translation of *Philosophie des Schönen*, entitled *Shinbi kōryō* 審美綱領, was published in 1898.<sup>89</sup>

118 In truth, this attitude followed directly in the wake of the introduction of Western aesthetic concepts, which was one of the major undertakings of – and principal causes of the revolution in – Meiji intellectual and artistic circles.<sup>90</sup> Fukuzawa Yukichi 福沢諭吉 (1834-1901) himself, in *Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情 (Conditions in the West) in 1866, and even more so in *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論之概略 (An Outline of a Theory of Civilisation) in 1875, acknowledged the importance of arts and letters in Western society. Thanks to the efforts of thinkers such as Nishi Amane 西周 (1829-1897), in particular his 1870-1872 lectures *The Links between all Sciences* (*Hyakugaku renkan* 百学連環), and his 1875 text *Bimyōgaku setsu* 微妙学説 (The Theory of Aesthetics), or Kikuchi Dairoku 菊池大麓 (1855-1917), who in 1879 translated a English guide to rhetoric and poetics entitled *Shūji oyobi kabun* 修辭及華文 (Rhetoric and Belles-Lettres), the main concepts of Western aesthetics existed in Japanese. In 1882 a famous lecture by Ernest Fenollosa on *The True Theory of Art* (*Bijutsu shinsetsu* 美術真説)



went down in history, leading to a re-appraisal of ancient Japanese fine arts, in particular painting and sculpture, as well as a movement to revive them. Nakae Chōmin 中江兆民 (1847-1901) then presented the neo-Hegelian aesthetics of Eugène Véron in *Wishi no bigaku* 維氏美学 (The Aesthetics of Mr V., 1883-1884). Far from remaining confined to small groups of initiates, the vocabulary, concepts and reasoning introduced by these texts had a huge impact. Although based on his own readings and personal analyses, the stance adopted by Ōgai in 1889 cannot be explained without taking into account these circumstances.

119 Be that as it may, it was armed with his convictions that Ōgai launched a “literary criticism” journal with his friends. It served as the spearhead for his contribution to numerous debates, whether the aforementioned debate with Shōyō on “submerged ideals”, or others on a wide variety of subjects.<sup>91</sup> In fact, aside from defending his own opinions, one wonders if it was not purely a love of debating and courting controversy that motivated this author the most. In any case, in his long article from January 1890, “Meiji nijūni-nen hihyōka no shigan”, he did not hesitate to review the activities of his “colleagues” and fellow critics from other journals over the previous year, whether Tsubouchi Shōyō, Ishibashi Ningetsu 石橋忍月 (1865-1926), who mainly wrote for *Kokumin no tomo*, or Uchida Roan 内田魯庵 (also known as Fuchian 不知庵, 1868-1929), who worked for the journal *Jogaku zasshi* 女学雑誌 (The Women’s Magazine) edited by Iwamoto Yoshiharu 巖本善治 (1863-1942). There can be no doubt: the public theatre for debate desired by Sohō, the “criticism of criticism” whose appearance was fearfully awaited with anxious irony by those in charge of *Tōkyō keizai zasshi*, had well and truly come into existence.

## The age and moment of criticism

120 “In Japanese literature [...] the creative act has gone hand in hand with a continual effort to reflect on practice and principles”, wrote Jean-Jacques Origas,<sup>92</sup> and it is certain that ever since the time of Japan’s ancient texts, the lineaments of a critical, reflective – metadiscursive if you will – activity concerning what are today termed “literary” works have existed in Japan. Thus, in the ninth century the Buddhist monk Kūkai 空海 (774-835), founder of the Shingon 真言 school of Buddhism in Japan, compiled a collection of treatises on poetry and Chinese rhetoric in *Bunkyō hifuron* 文鏡秘府論 (Treatises on the Secret Treasury of the Literary Mirror). This aspect of Japan’s intellectual and artistic life continued unabated throughout the centuries, and this explains that Hisamatsu Sen’ichi<sup>93</sup> 久松潜一 (1894-1976) was able to present an impressive overview of the *History of Japanese Literary Criticism* in his monumental five-volume work *Nihon bungaku hyōron-shi* 日本文学評論史 (published between 1935 and 1950 based on lectures given between 1924 and 1931). This publication pays tribute to the wealth of thought on *waka* (*karon*), *haikai* (*haiwa*) and Sino-Japanese poetry (*shiwa*), in addition to *nō* (*nōron*) and *monogatari*. Given these circumstances, how is it possible to talk, as I have done, of a “birth” or “rise” of criticism in around 1886-1887?

121 It must be pointed out first of all that the majority of reflections on Japanese literature prior to this period were written in the context of existing writing practices, in particular poetic, which required writers, whether amateur or professional, to assimilate a body of references and continue in the tradition of canonical texts. Fundamentally, these ancient “literary critiques” paid little heed to newly published books – an expression which in any case is meaningless when referring to past centuries – and were not aimed at pure readers. Whether directly or indirectly, their objective was always to help or encourage people to write.

122 From this point of view, a certain evolution had undoubtedly taken place during the



Edo era. The growth of the publishing industry – and thus a book market – on the one hand, combined with an increase in the penetration and density of communication networks on the other – and thus the establishment of a realm open to information and rumour, a kind of “proto-public sphere” as it were – had led to the appearance of para-promotional works such as *hyōbanki* 評判記 (“record of reputations”), which compiled a sort of ranking and brief review of popular celebrities, including actors, courtesans or, less frequently, certain writers such as poets specialised in *kyōka* 狂歌 (mad poems).

123 Other more elaborate examples can also be cited. The *Genroku Taiheiki* 元禄大平記 (Chronicle of the Great Peace of the Genroku Era [1688-1704], 1702), by the novelist Miyako no Nishiki 都の錦 (born in 1675), presents fictional publishers and booksellers from Kyoto and Osaka engaged in rambling discussions on the state of the publishing world and the reputation of contemporary novelists.<sup>94</sup> Similarly, the *Imayō heta dangi* 当世下手談義 (A Clumsy Sermon on our Times, 1752) by Jōkanbō Kōa 静観房好阿 (year of birth and death unknown), which established a genre of humorous novels known as *dangi-bon* 談義本, depicted the customs of the Edo upper-classes and in doing so passed judgment on the novelists of the time.<sup>95</sup>

124 Nevertheless, considerable differences remain between this and developments that took place in the second half of the 1880s. These relate first of all to the general state of the publishing industry: in the Edo period, for example, the power wielded by publishers and booksellers, who controlled the entire process of writing, manufacturing and distributing books, was in no way balanced or counterbalanced by specialist intermediaries like the critics of the latter half of the Meiji era. Periodicals – newspapers and journals – did not exist. There was no real arena for public debate. Furthermore, the nature of discourse on literary works changed radically in the middle of the Meiji era, when alongside the fleeting, laudatory or vicious reviews, as well as scholarly commentary, a well-structured discourse appeared based on poetic, rhetorical and aesthetic concepts.

125 It is precisely these differences that allow me to speak of a “birth” and “rise” of literary criticism in Japan in 1886-1887, without denying of course the existence of theoretical reflection on literary works in previous periods. This theoretical reflection could also be termed “criticism”, provided that we keep in mind the unique character, which I have attempted to highlight, of what emerged at this turning point in history. “Criticism”, in the specific sense that developed in the mid-Meiji era, doubtless possessed three new, previously unseen characteristics: it reviewed newly published material, using scholarly discourse drawn from the field of aesthetics, within the public sphere established by periodicals.

126 More fundamentally perhaps, the nature of literature itself changed at the end of the 1880s. At a time when writing practices were torn, fragmented even, between entertainment (*yūgei* 遊芸) and scholarship (*gakumon* 学問), a new field took on an independent existence, one in which the soul of a nation lived and grew stronger, through the art of language, over the course of its history. We have already seen several accounts of this emancipation, relativization and nationalisation of literature through the analyses presented in this paper, in particular from Ōnishi and Ōgai. They appear to have reached a peak in 1890 in such pioneering and analogous endeavours as *Nihon bungakushi* 日本文学史 (History of Japanese Literature) by Mikami Sanji 三上参次 (1865-1939) and Takatsu Kuwasaburō 高津鉄三郎 (1864-1921), *Kokubungaku tokuhon* 国文学読本 (National Literature Reader) by Haga Yaichi 芳賀矢一 (1867-1927) and Tachibana Sensaburō 立花銚三郎 (1867-1901), and *Kokubungaku* 国文学 (National Literature) by Ueda Kazutoshi 上田万年 (1867-1937).<sup>96</sup>

127 The rise of criticism between 1886 and 1889 is thus no accident, but rather the consequence and embodiment, not to mention the vehicle, of other changes, implemented with varying speed and at different moments, but which converged during this period to give rise to the founding texts of Sohō, Hanpō, Ōnishi and Ōgai.

128 From criticism as a spur (Hanpō) to criticism that sorts, separates and clarifies

(Ōgai), not to mention criticism as a gardener preparing the ground for the future (Ōnishi), in the three-year period between 1886 and 1889 we can clearly see a new discourse emerge, within its own specific conceptual framework, and acquire legitimacy and independence alongside creation. However, at the same time, different inflexions resonate in the work of these three authors. And it is this that is most remarkable in the history of the previous century: the growth of critical discourse in contemporary Japan has enabled the emergence of a variety of unique voices and provided a place for many important figures to work and gain recognition for their writing. It is of course impossible to name them here, even briefly. Perhaps it should merely be pointed out that after Natsume Sōseki's magnificent farewell to criticism in his two-part work *Bungakuron* 文学論 (1907) and *Bungaku hyōron* 文学評論 (1909), key figures such as Takayama Chogyū 高山樗牛 (1871-1902), Shimamura Hōgetsu 島村抱月 (1871-1918) and Masamune Hakuchō 正宗白鳥 (1879-1962) made a name for themselves at the beginning of the twentieth century.

129 However, if only one name could be retained amongst a myriad of others, it would of course be Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902-1983), whose entire oeuvre was dedicated to criticism.<sup>97</sup> And if only one moment could be seized, in a controversy-laden twentieth century, it would no doubt be the post-war period. Indeed, in January 1946, in a ruined Japan in which everything was in short supply, starting with the most basic means of subsistence, men in the prime of their lives found nothing better to do than to bring to fruition – without further ado – an idea conceived in the autumn of 1945, just weeks before Japan surrendered: found a journal of literary criticism. Its name was *Kindai bungaku* 近代文学 (Modern Literature) and its seven founders were Honda Shūgo 本多秋五 (born in 1908), Hirano Ken 平野謙 (1907-1978), Yamamuro Shizuka 山室静 (1906-2000), Haniya Yutaka 埴谷雄高 (1909-1997), Ara Masahito 荒正人 (1913-1979), Sasaki Kiichi 佐々木基一 (1914-1993) and Odagiri Hideo 小田切秀雄 (1916-2000).

130 Along with dozens of others – including Karaki Junzō 唐木順三 (1904-1980), Kuwabara Takeo 桑原武夫 (1904-1988), Itō Sei 伊藤整 (1905-1969), Takeuchi Yoshimi 竹内好 (1910-1977), Nakamura Mitsuo 中村光夫 (1911-1988), Takeda Taijun 武田泰淳 (1912-1976), Yoshida Ken'ichi 吉田健一 (1912-1977), Katō Shūichi 加藤周一 (born in 1919), Saeki Shōichi 佐伯彰一 (born in 1922), Maruya Saiichi 丸谷才一 (born in 1925), Yoshimoto Takaaki 吉本隆明 (born in 1924), Shinoda Hajime 篠田一士 (1927-1989), Etō Jun 江藤淳 (1933-1999), and Hasumi Shigehiko 蓮実重彦 (born in 1936) – they would embody over the next fifty years a certain permanence, an importance, a kind of necessity in Japanese intellectual life of a discourse that essentially grew from a critical reflection on literature and subsequently spread to every sphere of society.

131 Is this age over? In April 2000, after nine years of existence, the final issue of the quarterly journal *Hihyō kūkan* 批評空間, founded by Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人 (born in 1941) and Asada Akira 浅田彰 (born in 1957), two of the most prominent intellectuals of the late twentieth century, went to press. The journal was intended to provide a critical space, as indicated by the subheading *Critical Space*, and the Japanese equivalents provided by Asada: *kikiteki* 危機的, *rinkaiteki* 臨界的.<sup>98</sup> In fact, in April 1991 the first issue opened with a round-table discussion of “Problems Relating to Meiji Criticism” (*Meiji hihyō no sho-mondai* 明治批評の諸問題).<sup>99</sup> Thus we seem to have come full circle. But history is cunning, and no doubt we have not heard the last of criticism.

## Notes

1 One of the initial stimuli behind this paper was an essay by Komori Yōichi 小森陽一, “Kindai hihyō no shuppatsu” 近代批評の出発 (The Departure of Modern Criticism), *Hihyō kūkan* 批評空間, no. 1 (“Meiji Nihon no hihyō” 明治日本の批評), Fukutake shoten, February 1991, pp. 69-84. It initially existed in the form of presentations given at the interdisciplinary seminar “Social Science in Japan: Past and Future” (Sciences sociales au Japon: héritages et perspectives) organised by EHESS, CNRS, Inalco and Paris 7 University, and coordinated by

Annick Horiuchi and Patrick Beillevaire, on 1 April 1999; and the doctoral seminar “Meiji Texts” (Textes de Meiji) which I run at the Inalco Centre for Japanese Studies alongside Jean-Jacques Origas and Christophe Marquet, in December 1999 and January 2000. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Messrs Origas and Marquet for their time and suggestions, as well as the seminar’s regular participants Jean Guillaud, Yamashiro Yuka, Kawamura Hatsuho, Doi Yōko, Sylvain Chollet and G erald Peloux. Special thanks go to Yoshida Akemi for her particularly instructive comments on a first draft of this paper.

2 Quoted by Komori Y ichi, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

3 For an overview, see the following anthologies: *Meiji geijutsu/bungaku ronsh * 明治芸術・文学論集, compiled by Hijikata Teiichi 土方定一, “Meiji bungaku zensh ” collection, book 79, Chikuma shob , 1975; *Kindai hy ronsh * 近代評論集, vol. I, compiled and annotated by Kawazoe Kunimoto 川副国基, and vol. II, compiled by Tanaka Yasutaka 田中保隆, “Nihon kindai bungaku taikai” collection 日本近代文学大系, books 57 and 58, Kadokawa shoten, 1972; *Meiji-ki* 明治期, vol. I, II and III, compiled respectively by Yoshida Seiichi 吉田精一 and Asai Kiyoshi 浅井清, Inagaki Tatsur  稲垣達郎 and Sat  Masaru 佐藤勝, and Yoshida Seiichi and Wada Kingo 和田謹吾, “Kindai bungaku hy ron taikai” collection 近代文学評論大系, books 1, 2 and 3, Kadokawa shoten, 1971-1972.

4 I could have added “Hihy  no hy jun” 批評の標準 (The Norms of Criticism) by Tsubouchi Sh y , published in *Ch o gakujutsu zasshi* in September 1887.

Aside from the aforementioned essay by Komori, the previously quoted first issue of *Hihy  k kan* also featured an essay by Noguchi Takehiko 野口武彦, “Kindai Nihon bungaku to ‘hihy ’ no hakken” 近代日本文学と「批評」の発見 (Modern Japanese Literature and the Discovery of ‘Criticism’), pp. 6-26; as well as a round-table discussion on “Meiji hihy  no sho-mondai” 明治批評の諸問題 (Issues Relating to Meiji-Era Criticism), with Asada Akira 浅田彰, Karatani K jin 柄谷行人, Hasumi Shigehiko 蓮実重彦 and Miura Masashi 三浦雅士, pp. 27-68.

5 Quoted by Komori Y ichi, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

6 I am extremely grateful to Mr Jean Guillaud for having brought this text to my attention; the quote is taken from *Roka zensh * 蘆花全集, Shinch sha, 1928, vol. 10, p. 161.

7 The characters “h  朋” and “y  友” have a similar meaning (“friend”).

8 Based on Yamamuro Shin’ichi 山室信一, “Kokumin kokka keiseiki no genron to media” 国民形成期の言論とメディア (Public Opinion and the Media during the Formative Period of the Nation-State), postscript from the volume *Genron to media* 言論とメディア, “Nihon kindai shis  taikai” 日本近代思想大系 collection, book 11, Iwanami shoten, 1990, p. 498. For the Edo period, see Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan*, Leiden, Brill, 1998, p. 140.

9 There is a facsimile collection of catalogues and new publication lists from the Meiji era: *Nihon shoseki bunrui s -moku-roku* 日本書籍分類総目録, vols 1-7, Nihon tosho sent , 1985.

10 Letterpress printing, which had been used in Japan on several occasions in the past, was reintroduced in around 1870, initially to print newspapers. It became widespread in around 1877. K no Kensuke 紅野謙介 (*Shomotsu no kindai* 書物の近代, Chikuma shob , 1992, p. 23) cites the example of *Saikoku risshi-hen* 西国立志編 (a translation of *Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles), which was first published in 1870-1871 as eleven xylographed paperback fascicules, then in 1877 as a single 764-page printed volume bound at the spine. According to K no this process spread to fictional works in around 1882. See also P. Kornicki, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-166.

11 For example, Maruzen sh sha 丸善商社, founded in 1869 by Hayashi Y teki 早矢仕有的 (1837-1901), which specialised in disseminating western learning; Kink -d  金港堂, founded in 1875, which focused on publishing textbooks and reference books; Y shi-kaku 有史閣, founded in 1877, which devoted itself to publishing scientific works; and Shun’y -d  春陽堂, founded in 1878 by Wada Tokutar  和田篤太郎 (1857-1899), which chiefly published literary works.

12 His first undertaking was an enlightening one, involving the creation of the monthly periodical *Nihon taika ronsh * 日本大家論集 (Essays by Eminent Japanese Writers), which went into publication in October 1887. This periodical included a collection of essays by leading figures. Ohashi had “borrowed” these texts from high quality contemporary journals. While the journal’s intellectual credentials could not be faulted, on the contrary! the problem was that the novice publisher had taken advantage of a legal loophole to use these texts without permission and without paying copyright.

13 Its founder’s lack of scruples earned the company the nickname “Akubunkan” 悪文館 (*aku* 悪 meaning “evil”), despite its real name seemingly being derived from a passage in *The Analects* (*Lun’yu* 論語, VI), by Kongzi 孔子, in which it says “*bo xue wu wen*” 博学於文 (*hiroku bun ni manabite* 博く文に学びて in Japanese), meaning “to open the mind through literature”, “to widen one’s knowledge”, or to “widen one’s knowledge through texts”.

14 My figures are based on the “Chronology of Meiji Journals” (Meiji zasshi nenpy  明治雑誌年表) published in the appendix of *Zasshi* 雑誌, volume 18 of the series “Meiji bunka zensh ”

明治文化全集, edited by Yoshino Sakuzō 吉野作造 (1878-1923), and published by Meiji bunka kenkyūkai 明治文化研究会, Nihon hyōronsha 日本評論社, 1927 (reprinted 1955-1956).

15 Titles that ceased publication must of course also be taken into account. *Meiroku zasshi*, for example, ran for just three years.

16 Based on Hiraoka Toshio 平岡敏郎, “*Kokumin no tomo*”, *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten* 日本近代文学大事典, vol. 5 (*Shinbun - zasshi*), Kōdansha, 1977, p. 111.

17 I would like to thank Yamashiro Yuka for having brought to my attention this unjustly forgotten publication, which I have quoted based on photocopies of the original she sent to me.

18 As was the case for an opuscle published by Sohō two years earlier: *Shōrai no Nihon* 将来之日本 (The Future Japan), about which Miyazaki wrote:

In the middle of Meiji 19 (1886), *Keizai zasshi* published an opuscle entitled *Shōrai no Nihon*, which was well received in the press and consequently was immediately reprinted once, twice, exciting the passions of students from virtually the entire country.

He then added:

hortly after wondering what the editorial vision of *Kokumin no tomo* was, the first issue came out, was reprinted and praised by newspapers from around the entire country.

19 Based on Christiane Séguy, *Histoire de la presse japonaise* (History of the Japanese Press), POF, 1993, pp. 213-219.

20 See for example Christian Galan, « Le paysage scolaire à la veille de la Restauration de Meiji – Écoles et manuels » (Japan’s Educational Landscape on the Eve of the Meiji Restoration: Schools and Textbooks), *Ebisu – Études japonaises*, no. 17, spring-summer 1998, pp. 5-48.

21 These figures come from *Nihon no kyōiku hyakunen* 日本の教育百年, Monbushō, 1972, appendices.

22 Although these disappeared shortly after, before reappearing a little later on: the Liberal Party (Jiyūtō 自由党) was founded in 1881, and the Constitutional Reform Party (Rikken kaishintō 立憲改進黨) in 1882.

23 For further information on this subject see Philippe Chemouilli, *Les épidémies de choléra et la mise en place d’un appareil moderne de santé publique dans le Japon de Meiji* (Cholera Epidemics and the Creation of a Modern Public Health System in Meiji Japan), unpublished master’s thesis, supervised by P.-F. Souyri, Inalco, 2000.

24 The name Fukumoto Nichinan 福本日南 (1857-1921) must be added. Note that the journal’s contributors included Hasegawa Tatsunosuke 長谷川辰之助, alias Futabatei Shimei. For more information on all of these figures see Kenneth B. Pyle, *The New Generation in Meiji Japan – Problems of Cultural Identity, 1885-1895*, Stanford University Press, 1969.

25 See Jürgen Habermas, *L’Espace public*, translated from German by Marc B. de Launay, Payot, 1993 (original: *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, 1962; translated into English by Thomas Burger as *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, MIT Press, 1991).

26 One will remember of course the analyses of Benedict Anderson on the links between the emergence of print and the rapid growth of nationalism in *Imagined Communities*, 1983 (translated into French as *L’Imaginaire national*, La Découverte, 1996, p. 45, 50, 54-57).

27 *Moshio-gusa* usually refers to seaweed that is harvested (*kakiatsumeru* 掻き集める) in order to extract salt, a metaphorical image used since the Heian period to represent the act of collecting written texts (*kakiatsumeru* 書き集める).

28 The history of the introduction of statistics to Japan - the consequences of which can easily be imagined - would need to be written to provide a more comprehensive, but more abstract, picture of Japan’s national unity. The term *tōkei* 統計 is said to have appeared in around 1882-1883. It is interesting to note, for example, that from February to August 1889, Ōgai led an extremely fierce debate in his journal *Tōkyō iji shinshi* on the appropriate way to understand public health statistics.

29 During the Meiji era journals existed that were composed entirely of texts written by readers, but these are another matter.

30 An impressive list of all these famous external contributors can be found in the entry “*Kokumin no tomo*” in *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten* 日本近代文学大事典, vol. 5, Kōdansha, 1977, pp. 111-112.

31 One need only read the *Heike Monogatari*! For further information on this subject see Claire-Akiko Brisset, “Le nom dans l’épopée – Aspects du *Heike monogatari*” (The Name in the Epic – Aspects of the *Tale of the Heike*), *Cipango*, n° 8, 1999, p. 119-158.

32 *Kawaraban* were short-lived news sheets printed at irregular intervals to cover specific events; *hyōbanki* were publications that ranked the fame of prominent individuals in a specific arena of popular culture (theatre or pleasure quarters, for example); *banzuke* were a kind of chart ranking talented individuals in a particular entertainment sector (*sumō* or satirical



poetry for example).

33 Kōno Kensuke, *op. cit.*, pp. 129-154

34 This was the name of a section in *Nipponjin* reserved for readers' texts.

35 The Yangtze River (Yangzi-jiang 揚子江), or Blue River.

36 Proof can be found on the website for the bookstore Kinokuniya 紀伊国屋 (bookweb.kinokuniya.co.jp), where the section “*hyōron*” includes works that belong strictly to what we know as literary criticism, while the section “*hihyō*” contains works that extend more generally to the “vanguard” of intellectual life (somewhat like in the journal *Critique*, founded by Georges Bataille).

37 In *Hyakugaku renkan* 百学連環 (The Links between all Sciences, lectures given between 1870-1872), Nishi Amane suggested “*kansaijutsu*” 鑑裁術 (literally “the art of assessing and judging”) as being the equivalent of the English word “criticism”.

38 The reading “*jikihitsu*” exists for this compound word which at the time designated a text written by oneself as opposed to one written by a ghostwriter (*daihitsu* 代筆).

39 Based on Nakajima Kunihiro 中島国彦, “*Shuppan geppyō*”, *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten* 日本近代文学大事典, vol. 5 (*Shinbun - zasshi*), Kōdansha, 1977, p. 159. Additionally, see the text by Takada Hanpō, *infra*, p. 360.

40 Quoted by Gérard Delfau and Anne Roche, *Histoire Littérature* (History and Literature), Seuil, 1977, p. 42.

41 Komori Yōichi, “*Kindai hihyō no shuppatsu*”, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

42 Based on *Baudelaire, critique d'art* (Baudelaire: Art Critic), Gallimard, Folio, 1992, p. 344. English translation taken from Jonathan Mayne (ed). *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. London, Phaidon Press, 1964, p. 1.

43 Interestingly, the well-known journal *Chūū kōron* 中央公論 (Forum) - literally “public opinion of the centre” - which was given this name in 1899, was the result of a restructuring of *Hansei-kai zasshi* 反省会雑誌 (Journal of the Self-Examination Society), founded in the Buddhist circles of Kyoto by, among others, the future Takakuzu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 (1866-1945) in... 1887!

44 *Fukuō jiden* 福翁自伝 (The Autobiography of Old Fukuzawa), ch. “*Yōroppa kakkoku ni iku*” ヨーロッパ各国に行く (In the Countries of Europe), Iwanami bunko, 1978 (1st ed. 1899), p. 133, French translation by Jean-Noël Robert, published in *Quand le Japon s'ouvrit au monde* (The Opening up of Japan to the World) by Keiko Omoto and Francis Marcouin, Gallimard, « Découvertes » imprint, 1990, p. 122. This was also one of the aspects of Western civilisation that most left its mark on Fukuzawa. *Gakumon no susume* 学問のすすめ (An Encouragement to Learning, 1872-1876) could thus be read as an attempt to describe and encourage the conditions necessary for a public sphere in which the contradictory diversity of opinions and points of view would draw on the autonomy of each educated and thoughtful individual. Furthermore, more periodically, Fukuzawa's efforts to promote public speaking (*enzetsu* 演説) can be interpreted in this way (see for example *Gakumon no susume*, volume 12). In the foreword of his *Complete Works* (1898) he spoke of the need to “clearly express what one is thinking to a large number of people” (自分の思ふことを明らかに大勢の人に向て述ること) (quoted from Komori Yōichi 小森陽一, *Nihongo no kindai* 日本語の近代, Iwanami shoten, 2000, p. 32).

45 Reprinted in 1887 with the title *Shin Nihon no seinen* 新日本之青年 (The Youth of the New Japan).

46 It should be pointed out, however, that in the latter half of his life Sohō devoted himself to a monumental historical work, *Kinsei Nihon kokuminshi* 近世日本国民史 (The History of the Japanese People in the Early Modern Era, 1918-1962).

47 Oyamada was particularly famous for his work as a scholar, booklover and collector: his private library, *Yōshorō* 擁書楼, was one of the largest collections in the Edo period (see Okamura Keiji 岡村敬二, *Edo jidai no zōshoka tachi* 江戸時代の蔵書家たち, Kōdansha, 1996, pp. 8-77).

48 It is said that Hanpō's philosophy on journalism can be summed up by the following aphorism: “Always be one step ahead of society, never two” (*shakai yori ippo sakinzubeshi, niho wa sakinzubekarazu* 社会より一歩先んずべし、二歩は先んずべからず), quoted by Inagaki Tatsurō 稲垣達郎, “Takada Hanpō”, *Nihon kindai bungaku daijiten* 日本近代文学大事典, vol. 2, Kōdansha, 1977, p. 273.

49 Becoming an object of criticism was both a sign and an instrument of the revolution in the novel. This is why rather than opposing the novel and criticism, their simultaneous emergence must be considered intrinsically necessary.

50 Quoted from *Kindai hyōronshū*, “*Nihon kindai bungaku taikai*” collection, vol. 57,



Kadokawa shoten, *op. cit.*, pp. 50-65.

51 Based on N. Chapis, « *Shihua* », *Dictionnaire universel des littératures* (Universal Dictionary of Literatures), PUF, 1994, p. 3513.

52 Quote taken from *Kindai hyōronshū*, “Nihon kindai bungaku taikai” collection, vol. 57, Kadokawa shoten, *op. cit.*, p. 51. When creating the newspaper *Jiji shinpō* 時事新報 in 1882, Fukuzawa gave it the moto “*dokuritsu fuki*” 独立不羈 (autonomy and independence) and announced a principle of neutrality and impartiality (*fuhen futō* 不偏不党).

53 Quoted by Komori Yōichi, “Kindai hihiyō no shuppatsu” *op. cit.*, p. 73.

54 Komori (*ibid.*) provides a particularly striking example of the ferocity with which *Shuppan geppyō* denounced the plagiarism (*hyōsetsu* 剽窃) shamelessly committed by certain journals of the period.

55 And much ingratitude when one considers how much his prose owes to Chinese rhetoric!

56 Although this echoes the expression “*mibun wo tsukusu*” 身分を尽くす (to carry out the duties associated with one’s status) – which characterised the official moral code of the Edo period –, we must take stock of the change this represented: that each individual had a task to fulfil, whatever his station, did not mean that he was intrinsically a prisoner of his condition.

57 As was fruitfully suggested to me by Jean-Jacques Origas at the “Meiji Texts” seminar.

58 On the subject of Shintō purification, see also, for example, François Macé’s essay in the spring 2002 special issue of *Cipango*, Spring 2002, p. 7 *et seqq.*

59 *Ōgai zenshū* 鷗外全集, vol. 25, Iwanami shoten, 1973, p. 123. Gérard Delfau and Anne Roche wrote the following with regards the period 1866-1870 (*op. cit.*, p. 44): “Criticism truly gained acceptance [...] and became a necessary profession that was complementary to the boom in printed matter from 1830”.

60 This would not take place until 1890. On this subject see my paper *Recherches sur la formation d’une littérature nationale dans le Japon des années 1880-1890 – Genèse d’une histoire, définitions d’un corpus* (Research on the Development of a National Literature in Japan between 1880-1890: Genesis of a History, Definitions of a Corpus), unpublished typescript, Inalco, January 2000. See also my book *Littérature et Génie national* (Literature and National Genius), Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 2005.

61 And in particular in *Rikugō zasshi* 六合雜誌 (The Cosmos), founded in 1880 by Kozaki Hiromichi 小崎弘道 (1856-1938) and Uemura Masahisa 植村正久 (1858-1925).

62 He was one of many young authors struck down before their fortieth birthdays between 1894 and 1908: Kitamura Tōkoku (1868-1894), Nakano Shōyō (1867-1894), Higuchi Ichiyō (1872-1896), Masaoka Shiki (1867-1902) and Kunikida Doppo (1871-1908).

63 Quoted from *Shinchō Nihon bungaku jiten* 新潮日本文学辞典, Shinchōsha, 1988, p. 190.

64 Quoted from *Meiji geijutsu/bungaku ronshū*, “Meiji bungaku zenshū” collection, vol. 79, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-169; and *Kindai hyōronshū*, “Nihon kindai bungaku taikai” collection, vol. 57, Kadokawa shoten, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-84.

65 Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859).

66 This is not always the case in the rest of his text, despite its enticing plan: “*Sōsaku to hihiyō*” 創作と批評 (Creation and Criticism), “*Hihiyō no shokubun*” 批評の職分 (The Duty of Criticism), “*Hihiyō no han’i*” 批評の範囲 (The Scope of Criticism), “*Nani wo hihiyō subeki ka*” 何を批評すべき乎 (What should be Criticised?), “*Waga kuni no shisōkai*” 我国の思想界 (The World of Thought in Our Country), “*Hihiyō wo yō suru mono*” 批評を要する者 (What Must be Criticised).

67 And let us remember that Ōnishi published his essay on criticism in Sohō’s journal.

68 This pen name was mainly used by Ōgai between 1889 and 1893. For more information, see my opusculé *Les Tourments du nom – Essai sur les signatures d’Ōgai Mori Rintarō* (Na no wazurai – Ōgai Mori Rintarō no shomei ni tsuite 名のわづらひ 鷗外森林太郎の署名について) (Torments of the Name: Essay on the Signatures of Ōgai Mori Rintarō), Maison franco-japonaise, 1994.

69 Quoted from *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 25, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125. Ōgai continued:

In its heyday, the name Ōgai was dragged into a maelstrom of criticism and praise, and this brought me an artificial and illusory joy, earning me the mistrust of the academic and bureaucratic world (*Ibid.*, p. 125).

70 *Ibid.*, p. 122.

71 By omitting the first part.

72 Priced at 7 sen, this monthly journal measured 15.2 × 21.8. It contained approximately 50 or 60 pages per issue, sometimes a little more. It is said to have had a circulation of

2,000 copies at best.

73 *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 25, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

74 Often referred to by the initials “S.S.S.”.

75 According to Ōgai’s recollections, these royalties amounted to 50 yen (“*Shigarami zōshi no koro*” 「柵草紙」のころ, 1913, *Ōgai zenshū*, *op. cit.*, vol. 38, p. 282).

76 He shares with Ichimura the characteristic of having studied at the Koten kōshūka 古典講習科 (Classics Department) at the Imperial University.

77 He was also an adviser to the imperial court and, incidentally, the older brother of Yanagita Kunio.

78 According to “*Shigarami zōshi no koro*”, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

79 See page 4 of this paper.

80 “Seigaku no tōzen suru ya, hajime sono mono wo tsutaete sono kokoro wo tsutaezu” 西学の東漸するや、初その物を伝へてその心を伝へず。In many respects this phrase startlingly echoes the beginning of the short preface to *Seiyō jijō* 西洋事情 (Conditions in the West, 1866-1870) by Fukuzawa Yukichi: “*Yōseki no waga kuni ni hakurai suru ya hi sude ni hisashi*” 洋籍の我邦に舶来するや日既に久し (Western works arrived in our country long ago), as was pointed out to me by Jean-Jacques Origas.

81 Quoted from *Ōgai zenshū*, *op. cit.*, vol. 22, pp. 27-28 (this text is the version reprinted in 1896 in *Tsukigusa*. It varies slightly from the one published in *Shigarami zōshi*).

82 Unless Ōgai is referring to the period encompassing the end of the *bakufu*, which is less likely.

83 French translation by E. Lozerand, in *Cent ans de pensée au Japon* (A Hundred Years of Japanese Thought), edited by Yves-Marie Allieux, Picquier, 1996, volume 1, p. 117-126.

84 A concrete analysis of the journal is clearly necessary in order to compare it with his initial intentions. Let us simply state that although it was an essential vehicle for Ōgai’s prolific activity between 1889 and 1892, it did not contain such a high number of critiques but also included stories, poems, translations and literary history.

85 *Ōgai zenshū*, vol. 22, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

86 The two characters that form the term “*junjō*” are highly significant. “*Jun*” 準 refers to a measuring rod (*mizumori* 水盛) used to sound or probe a recipient or reservoir; “*jō*” 縄 refers to the string of an instrument (*suminawa* 墨縄) used to draw straight lines.

87 Not least among the standards that were implemented during this period was the Constitution in 1889!

88 Quoted from *Ōgai zenshū*, *op. cit.*, vol. 22, p. 28.

89 Before admitting his disillusion a few years later in *Mōzō* 妄想 (Daydreams), in 1911.

90 The best illustration of this triumph of aesthetics and its “norms” (*hyōjun* 標準) is no doubt provided in this passage from *Haikai taiyō* 俳諧大要 (The Elements of *Haikai*) by Masaoka Shiki – who had studied philosophy! – in 1895

*Haiku* is part of literature. Literature is part of art (*bijutsu*). Therefore the norms of beauty (*bi*) are also those of literature. In other words, whether in painting, sculpture, literature, theatre, poetry or the novel, criticism must be based on shared norms.

俳句は文学の一部なり。文学は美術の一部なり。故に美の標準は文学の標準なり。即ち絵画も彫刻も文学も演劇も詩歌小説も皆同一の標準を以て論評し得べし。

91 On his short stories *Maihime* and *Utakata no ki*, on rhyme, theatre and language reform, for example.

92 « L’affirmation de soi, l’oubli de soi – Création artistique et réflexion chez Masaoka Shiki » (Self-Affirmation and Self-Effacement - Artistic Creation and Reflection in Masaoka Shiki), *Cipango*, special issue entitled « Mélanges offerts à René Sieffert » (Miscellanies for René Sieffert), June 1994, p. 23.

93 Also worthy of mention is the posthumous work by Fujioka Sakutarō 藤岡作太郎 (1870-1910), *Nihon hyōronshi* 日本評論史 (The History of Japanese Criticism, 1911).

94 It includes, for example, severe criticism of the great master of the preceding generation, Saikaku 西鶴.

95 I am extremely grateful to Yoshida Akemi from the “Meiji Texts” seminar for providing me with this reference.

96 On this subject, see my paper *Recherches sur la formation d’une littérature nationale dans le Japon des années 1880-1890*, *op. cit.*

97 See Ninomiya Masayuki, *La Pensée de Kobayashi Hideo – Un intellectuel japonais au tournant de l'histoire* (The Thought of Kobayashi Hideo - A Japanese Intellectual at a Turning Point in History), Geneva/Paris, Librairie Droz, « Hautes études orientales » (Advanced Oriental Studies) collection, II-30, 1995.

98 “Henshū kōki” 編集後記, p. 258.

99 An initial series of 12 issues was published by Fukutake shoten 福武書店 from April 1991 to January 1994, followed by a second series of 25 issues published from April 1994 to April 2000 by Ōta shuppan 太田出版.

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