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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
Department of East Asian Languages and Cultures

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In Praise of the Peaks: Science, Art, and Nature in Kojima Usui's Mountain Literature
by
Aaron Paul Jasny

A dissertation presented to
The Graduate School
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Table of Contents

List of Figures	iv
Acknowledgments.....	v
Abstract.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Shifting views of mountains in Meiji Japan.....	4
Premodern mountains in literature.....	5
Modern mountains	9
Meiji mountaineers	11
Kojima Usui.....	13
Sangaku bungaku.....	18
Rethinking nature in Meiji Japan	19
Monuments to nature: Mountain literature and the natural environment.....	24
Chapter One: “The Novelty of Nature: Kojima Usui and Hierarchies of Genre in Modern Japanese Literature”.....	28
Testing the limits of traditional <i>kikōbun</i>	31
Into the mountains: Towards a new <i>kikōbun</i>	37
Knowledge of nature: A defense of science in literature	40
Shifting literary standards: <i>Shōsetsu</i> vs. <i>kikōbun</i>	48
<i>Kikōbun</i> ’s proper place: Writing nature, writing mountains.....	56
<i>Sangaku bungaku</i> : A Japanese literature of the mountains.....	63
Chapter Two: “Authentic Alpine: Scientific Knowledge and Natural Description in Kojima Usui’s Mountain Writing”	72
The “science” of Usui’s literary critique.....	77
“Scientist” and “scientific knowledge” in Usui	79
Science vs. literature: An exercise in contrast	85
Science for literature: Edifying the author through scientific knowledge	88
Literature for science: Bringing science to a wider audience	91
Other writers on literature and science.....	93
The authority of science: Scientific knowledge and authentic literature	100
Modes of seeing: Observation and objectivity.....	101

Authentic literature: A connection to the real	109
The authority of science	111
Chapter Three: “Visions of Nature: Scientific Gaze, Artistic Sense, and the Landscape of Modern Japan”	115
<i>Sangaku bungaku</i> and the visual arts	121
Climbing and sketching: Painters and Meiji alpinism	122
Painting with words: Visuality in Usui’s literary theory	125
Visuality in Usui’s <i>sangaku bungaku</i>	132
Re-envisioning Japan’s natural spaces	146
Landscape in Usui’s mountain aesthetics	148
Subject/object: Human agency in understanding the land	151
Configuring space through narratives of travel.....	155
Conclusion	158
Mountains left to climb	161
Other mountain writers	162
Mountaineering and the nation	163
Mountain ecologies	165
Bibliography	170

List of Figures

Figure 1: Kojima Usui memorial stone.....	4
Figure 2: Mountain chart	69
Figure 3: <i>Nezumiiro no inshō</i>	140
Figure 4: Mount Kita and surrounding peaks	141
Figure 5: Estimated map of the Shirane Range	142

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

In Praise of the Peaks: Science, Art, and Nature in Kojima Usui's Mountain Literature,

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Doctor of Philosophy in Japanese Language and Literature

East Asian Languages and Cultures

Washington University in St. Louis, 2019

Marvin H. Marcus, Chair

During the Meiji period (1868–1912), a newly constituted Japanese nation sought equal standing among the global powers it encountered with increasing frequency, by updating and modernizing in various fields of knowledge and cultural production. Science and technology were adopted and adapted from the nations of the West in order to bolster the economy, improve infrastructure, and ensure the health and well-being of the Japanese people. Meanwhile, literature and the arts were refashioned to make them more suitable for dealing with modernization, urbanization, empirical and rational thinking, and a regard for individual autonomy and subjectivity. Meiji Japan witnessed numerous innovations, which not only altered the daily lives of Japanese people, but fundamentally transformed the way Japanese saw and experienced their world.

In this dissertation, I analyze the critical and travel writing of mountain climber and writer Kojima Usui 小島烏水 (1874–1948). I position Usui's efforts to refashion the genre of travel writing (*kikōbun* 紀行文), and establish a Japanese genre of mountain writing (*sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学), within the larger movement to modernize literature during the Meiji period.

Usui's unique approach to the subject of literary genre, and the literary establishment's reaction to his writing, provide a fresh perspective on the values and hierarchies that informed the Meiji literary world. In his writings, Usui also engaged extensively with notions of scientific knowledge and the visual depiction of nature in painting. His incorporation of these concerns into his literature and criticism—especially the ramifications of the subjectivity/objectivity binary—makes an analysis of Usui's writing relevant to broader questions regarding the role that science and art played in the consolidation of individual subjectivity and the objectification of nature and landscape.

Kojima Usui epitomizes the Meiji project of modernization, through his efforts to update outmoded literary genres and fundamentally rethink the way Japanese interact with their natural environment. His work simultaneously reflects the nativist pushback against wholesale Westernization by calling on his fellow citizens to better appreciate and understand the mountains at the very heart of the Japanese landscape and the nation's identity.

Introduction

Embodying the purity of the Japanese alpine, stretching like two folding screens up and down the heart of Japan's main island, the Northern Japanese Alps are a sight to behold. There are many climbers planning to traverse the Japanese Alps this year, so perhaps these alpine areas, said to be as yet untrodden by humans, will finally bestow the key to their secrets unto human hands. I myself harbor no such lofty ambitions; hoping only to travel one small corner of that range, I left Tokyo on August 1 this year.

—Kojima Usui, “Nihon Kita Arupusu tozandan” 日本北アルプス登山談

August 12, 2019 will mark the third annual observance of Mountain Day (*yama no hi* 山の日), Japan's newest public holiday.¹ While for many the 16 official public holidays observed in Japan, which also include holidays such as Greenery Day and Marine Day, mean little more than a day off from work, for some the establishment of Mountain Day into law was the culmination of a long campaign to have Japan's mountain culture officially recognized. Etō Seishirō 衛藤征士郎, a Liberal Democratic Party Diet member who led the Mountain Day initiative, told the Wall Street Journal just before ratification of the holiday that Mountain Day was important because “[c]entral to Japanese culture are the ocean and the mountains. There is a day for the ocean, but not one for the mountains.”²

With about 73 percent of Japan's land mass being mountainous, it is easy to imagine that mountains would have played a significant role in Japan's culture historically. Of course mountain regions have provided homes and livelihoods for a portion of Japan's population throughout its history. The term *satoyama* 里山 (literally “village mountain”) has gained wide

¹ The holiday is scheduled annually on August 11, but because the holiday falls on a Sunday in 2019, it will be observed on Monday, August 12.

² Eleanor Warnock and Eric Pfanner, “Lawmaker Discusses Significance of Mountain Day,” Japan Real Time, *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2014. <https://blogs.wsj.com/japanrealtime/2014/05/22/lawmaker-discusses-significance-of-mountain-day/>.

currency since the post-war as a way of describing the relationship between rural villagers and the semi-cultivated forests and foothills that surround and provide resources for human settlements. Catherine Knight discusses the history of this term and its connection both to notions of “encultured nature” and to *furusato* 故郷/古里,³ arguing that it has been appropriated by government entities and has come to represent an idyllic past when Japanese people “lived in harmony with nature.”⁴ This nostalgic view of mountains is evident in Etō’s argument for the importance of Mountain Day, when he says that “40% of Tokyo residents said they didn’t have a hometown [in a recent survey]. But mountains are hometowns, beautiful mountains. I was the mayor of the town of Kusu in Oita prefecture where I come from. Tokyo people could come to Kusu and make it their hometown too.”⁵

The importance of mountains in Japanese culture is also manifest in contemporary popular culture. One example of this is the “yama girl” (*yama gāru* 山ガール) fashion trend, which boomed in 2010 and refers to “young trendily dressed female trekkers” “[s]porting colorful but functional outdoor clothes.”⁶ Rock climbing has also become more visible in daily Japanese life in the lead-up to the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo, which will be the first Games to include sport climbing as an event.

Mountains are also well-represented across various media genres. Sakamoto Shin’ichi and Nabeda Yoshirō’s *Kokō no hito* 孤高の人 (The Climber, 2007–2012) and Ishizuka Shin’ichi’s *Gaku: minna no yama* 岳 みんなの山 (Peak: Everyone’s Mountain, 2003–2012) are

³ *Furusato* is a complicated term to define. Most basically it refers to one’s hometown, but it also has heavy connotations of nostalgia and identity. For more on this term, see, for example, Jennifer Robertson, “It Takes a Village: Internationalization and Nostalgia in Postwar Japan,” in *Mirror of Modernity: Invented Traditions of Modern Japan*, ed. Stephen Vlastos (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 110–32.

⁴ Catherine Knight, “The Discourse of ‘Encultured Nature’ in Japan: The Concept of *Satoyama* and its Role in 21st-Century Nature Conservation,” *Asian Studies Review* 34 (2010): pp. 421–41.

⁵ Warnock and Pfanner, “Lawmaker Discusses Significance of Mountain Day.”

⁶ Eriko Arita, “Heading for the Hills—in Style,” *Japan Times*, Nov. 21, 2010.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/life/2010/11/21/general/heading-for-the-hills-in-style/>.

among the most well-known manga treatments of mountain climbing: both have won various awards, and the latter was a best seller and was adapted as a feature film. The 2009 film *Tsurugidake: ten no ki* 剣岳 点の記 (Mt. Tsurugidake) won the Japan Academy Prizes for Best Director (Kimura Daisaku) and Best Supporting Actor (Kagawa Teruyuki), and was nominated for Best Film and Best Actor. Both *Kokō no hito* and *Tsurugidake: ten no ki* were adaptations of novels by Nitta Jirō 新田次郎 (1912–1980), a prolific author of historical novels and perhaps the most well-known Japanese author of mountaineering related fiction. Fukata Kyūya's 深田久弥 (1903–1971) *Nihon hyakumeizan* 日本百名山 (100 famous Japanese mountains, 1964) has been a mainstay of Japanese mountain climbing culture since its publication, sparking general interest in hiking and trekking.

Mountain culture, especially as it relates to recreational activities such as camping, hiking, and climbing, is alive and well in contemporary Japan. This dissertation focuses on one of the earliest and most influential figures in Japan's modern fascination with the mountains, Kojima Usui 小島烏水 (1873–1948). Usui was a lover of nature and especially of the mountains, and he wrote extensively and eloquently “in praise of the peaks.”⁷ Analyzing Usui's literary criticism and non-fiction travel and nature writing from a variety of perspectives, I connect his views on Japan's mountains and other natural resources to larger questions of how the

⁷ This dissertation takes its title from a short essay by Usui entitled “Yama o sansuru bun” 山を讃する文 (In praise of the peaks, 1903). Though brief, the essay is a concise distillation of Usui's love for Japan's mountains, and his desire to see that appreciation spread. Usui's biographer Kondō Nobuyuki 近藤信行 chose a passage from this essay as the epithet for the memorial stone erected for Usui in the city of his birth, Takamatsu, at the first annual Kojima Usui Festival in 2013. See Figure 1.

Kinō no ware wa kyō no ware ni arazu, kyō no ware wa osoraku ashita no ware ni arazaramu, shikashite kore kōjō no ware nari, iyoiyo kōjō shite ware o wasure, hodo o ohite shizen ni kaeru. 昨日の我は今日の我にあらず、今日の我はおそらく明日の我にあらざらむ、而して是れ向上の我なり、愈よ向上して我を忘れ、程を逐ひて自然に帰る

“I am not the same today as I was yesterday; and tomorrow I will likely be different from who I am today. This is self-improvement. In the end I will advance to the point where I overcome my self and return to nature.”

relationship between humans and the natural environment was constructed in early 20th-century Japan.



Figure 1: Kojima Usui memorial stone

Memorial stone with relief of Kojima Usui and “Yama o sansuru bun” quotation, Mineyama Park, Takamatsu. Photograph taken by author, April 6, 2019.

Shifting views of mountains in Meiji Japan

The 1868 Meiji Restoration marked the end of a long-standing government policy of relative isolation from outside influence, and Japanese culture and society saw significant changes as they adapted to the new free flow of ideas and technologies from the West. Japan’s mountains were no exception to this large-scale modernization, as new scientific approaches to the natural world and ideas of leisure time and recreation gained footholds in Japan. The Meiji period (1868–1912) saw significant changes in the way the Japanese understood the mountains that dominated their nation.

It has been well established in studies of mountaineering culture that for modern mountaineering—simply put, mountain climbing which is motivated at least in part by

recreational goals, or climbing for the sake of climbing—to emerge in the 18th and 19th centuries, there had to be a significant shift in the way the mountains (particularly the European Alps) were valued culturally. Summed up in the title of one of the most influential studies on the subject, Marjorie Hope Nicholson’s *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite*, this shift involved seeing the mountains, which had once been unsightly protuberances, impassable barriers, and the home of dragons and other awful beasts, as sights of beauty, self-improvement, and godliness.

In contrast, in Japan mountains had been glorified from the earliest historical and literary sources as places for confirming royal authority and abodes of the gods. The modernization of Japan’s mountains was not therefore a move from “gloom” to “glory,” but a secularization. Of course Meiji mountaineers such as Kojima Usui were strongly influenced by the Enlightenment and Romanticist approaches of their European predecessors and contemporaries; nevertheless, these Japanese mountaineers were building on a rich repository of native approaches to the mountains.

Premodern mountains in literature

Mountains are an important topos from the earliest Japanese poetry. In the practice of *kunimi* 国見 (viewing the land), the mountain was the vantage point from which the emperor could survey his domain. An early example is attributed to the legendary imperial prince Yamato Takeru 日本武尊/倭建命 upon his return from his campaign against the eastern barbarians:

*Great Yamato, of all lands most supreme!
Enclosed by ranks of verdant banks
on surrounding hills,
Great Yamato—unmatched for beauty!*⁸

⁸ Steven D. Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry: An Anthology* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press: 1991), pp. 19–20.

In this and other examples of *kunimi* poetry, the beauty of the landscape that makes up the imperial domain is praised, often alongside the prosperity of the people who inhabit it, ritually reinforcing the benevolent authority of the imperial throne. A similar example from Kakinomoto no Hitomaro 柿本人麻呂 (fl. ca. 680-700) describes how the mountain itself praises the sovereign when she visits her palace at Mount Yoshino:

...
*and when she climbs up
and standing surveys the land,
the green-wall mountains
ranging in their serried ranks,
wishing to present
tribute from the mountain gods,
deck their heads with flowers
if the season be springtime,
and wear colored leaves
with the coming of autumn.*
...⁹

For later writers, the mountain was a place of retreat from the city. To Kamo no Chōmei 鴨長明 (1153-1216) and Yoshida Kenkō 吉田兼好 (1283-1350), a simple life in a mountainside hut represented an escape from the secular world of the city and a wholehearted dedication to their art and their religion. Of course this should not be taken as the kind of romantic removal from society and return to nature expressed by writers like Byron and Thoreau—for medieval recluses, the mountain’s value was in its lack of any temptations to worldly attachment (though Kamo no Chōmei finds himself unable to relinquish his attachment even to his small mountain hut). It should also be noted that the “reclusion” of the mountains visited in these texts is relative. Jack Stoneman explains that the *yama* 山 (mountain) in *yamazato* 山里 (mountain home), one of the tropes central to medieval recluse literature, indicates conceptual distance from the capital,

⁹ Carter, *Traditional Japanese Poetry*, p. 28.

but usually not a great degree of physical isolation.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the idea of the mountain as a conceptual contrast to the city is an important one, and is carried over with new meanings in modern mountain literature.

Related to recluse literature is premodern travel writing, which took monk-poets even farther afield. Considering that they were motivated to travel in large part by the famous places they could see and write their own poetry about, and therefore never strayed far from the roads and inns that facilitated them on their journeys, even these travelers should not be seen as intrepid explorers of the wilderness. Even so, their reactions to the extremes the hinterlands offered are sometimes interesting, as in Matsuo Bashō's 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694) account of his traverse of some mountain passes near present-day Chikuma, Nagano Prefecture: "The tremendous mountain peaks towered over my head, to my left flowed a great river, and I thought of the great abyss that extended below the cliff. There was not so much as a square foot of flat land in sight, so I shifted uneasily in the saddle, and I couldn't stop myself from worrying for even a second."¹¹ Bashō expresses fear and awe at the topographical extremes he encounters in the mountains, but he does not dwell on his subjective reactions to his surroundings, moving quickly to an enumeration of famous place-names and couching his reflections in the poetic language that relied on reference to established conventions and tropes.

Another strain of Edo-period (1603–1868) travel literature that is arguably a more direct predecessor of the modern variety was that by scholars such as Furukawa Kōshōken 古川古松軒 (1726–1807), Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒 (1630–1714), and Tachibana Nankei 橘南谿 (1753–1905). While in many cases the travel of these writers was motivated by scholarly pursuits—the

¹⁰ Stoneman, Jack. "So Deep in the Mountains: Saigyō's Yama fukami Poems and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Poetry." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 68, no. 2 (2008): pp. 45–46.

¹¹ *Nihon Koten Bungaku Zenshū*, vol. 41 (Tōkyō: Shōgakkan: 1985), p. 334.

physician Tachibana Nankei, for example, traveled to remote villages in order to study the varieties of illness that existed in the provinces, and wrote travelogues as byproducts of his journeys—their foundation of scientific knowledge and their interest in observation and recording of the natural world led to travel writing not entirely unlike that of the early European Alpine explorers.

One more use of the mountain topos in premodern literature is as the abode of supernatural creatures, from generic *oni* 鬼 demons, to the bird-demon hybrid *tengu* 天狗 associated with the mountain ascetic tradition of Shūgendō 修驗道, to the *yamanba* 山姥 mountain crone. While each of these figures, along with a host of others, is alternatively depicted as benevolent or malevolent depending on the time period and genre, they all speak to the element of the unknown and supernatural associated with the high peaks in premodern Japan.

While the mountain literature inaugurated by Kojima Usui did not necessarily respond directly to these premodern literary approaches to mountains,¹² an understanding of the literary background is instructive in understanding what the mountain writers were building with their modern genre. The relative silence of modern mountain writing regarding its premodern predecessors says much about its own aims: in leaving behind the baggage of famous places, modern mountain enthusiasts were able to open up their field of vision to include the Japanese landscape in its entirety, and respond to it unrestricted by rules of poetic association. And in replacing (or frequently supplementing) folk traditions of mountains with scientific observation, Meiji and Taishō (1912–1926) alpinists brought the Japanese mountains into the modern age.

¹² Indeed, Kären Wigen argues that while another alpine apologist, Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863–1927), had a more patriotic bent and played up the native tradition of mountain appreciation, Usui deliberately and strategically silenced that tradition in order to emphasize the urgency of establishing a fully modern “alpine apparatus.” See Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 2005), pp. 22–23.

Modern mountains

As Meiji-period efforts to modernize gathered steam, mountains came to be appreciated in new and different ways. Mountains such as Mount Fuji¹³ and Mount Tsukuba¹⁴ were historically more familiar and accessible; in the Meiji period, Japan's less well-known and almost entirely unexplored mountains—especially the ranges now known collectively as the Japanese Alps, which stretch from Niigata Prefecture in the north to Shizuoka Prefecture in the south—loomed larger as they became sites for a variety of “modern” activities. The Land Survey Department of the Imperial Japanese Army began establishing triangulation sites on mountain peaks throughout the archipelago in 1879; scientists, including botanists, entomologists, and geologists among others, started gathering specimens and making observations at higher altitudes; and middle- and upper-class city dwellers took advantage of their new-found leisure time and improved infrastructure to set off on summer excursions to the uncharted mountains of Japan's interior.

The modern history of mountaineering in Japan has a significant Westerner presence, at least in its early decades. As part of its modernization effort, Japan invited experts in various fields of science, technology, and scholarship from the West to help establish their own practices in Japan; given that this period coincided with the “silver age of alpinism,” in the wake of the founding of the Alpine Club in London in 1857, it is no surprise that the British and other European travelers to Japan would explore its alpine offerings. Rutherford Alcock, the British

¹³ *Fuji-san* 富士山, 3,776 meters. The country's tallest mountain, Mount Fuji has likely been the most important mountain culturally within Japan, and is certainly the most well-known Japanese peak abroad. Despite its imposing elevation, the mountain's profile and position of prominence on an otherwise relatively flat plain have made it popular as a destination for pilgrimage and a subject for art. For a history of Mount Fuji's cultural importance in Japan with a focus on its religious associations, see H. Byron Earhart, *Mount Fuji: Icon of Japan*. (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2011).

¹⁴ *Tsukuba-san* 筑波山, 877 meters. Mount Tsukuba has likewise held a prominent place in Japan's cultural history. Given its isolated position on the Kantō Plain north of Tokyo and the striking double peak of the mountain, it has been the subject of myths and legends and a popular site of religious activity.

Consul-General in Japan, was the first foreigner to climb Mount Fuji when he made his ascent in 1860. William Gowland (1842–1922) was a chemist and metallurgist hired by the Japanese government to establish techniques for mining and minting coinage, and he was the first foreigner to explore much of what would come to be known as the Northern Alps. Gowland is credited with coining the term “Japanese Alps,” which he used tentatively in his extensive contributions to the first major guide for Japan, *Handbook for Travellers in Japan* in 1881. And of course no discussion of modern Japanese mountaineering would be complete without reference to Walter Weston (1860–1940), the reputed “father of Japanese mountaineering,” whose *Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps* (1896) and *The Playground of the Far East* (1918) helped to introduce British climbers to Japan’s mountains, and whose encouragement was an important impetus for the founding of the Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) in 1905.

To set the beginnings of Japanese mountaineering in the ascents of these early Western climbers, however, ignores the agency and creativity of the Japanese climbers who forged a Japanese mountaineering culture at the intersection of Japan’s historical tradition of mountain climbing and the sport as practiced by Europeans. This included not only Kojima Usui and the other founders and early members of the JAC, but also the local hunters who were employed as guides by Western and Japanese climbers alike, and the surveyors and botanists who were climbing and doing field work from the first decade of Meiji. Valerie Hamilton characterizes the ascription of fatherhood to Weston as a “myth” long in the making, and the perpetuation of this myth obscures the complex, discursive origin of Japanese mountaineering and mountain literature.

Meiji mountaineers

Among the many tasks of the climbers who sought to establish a Japanese mountain climbing tradition was to form an identity for the Japanese mountaineer. This modern mountain climbing identity had to be set off both from the poet-hermit in the tradition of recluse literature, the mountain ascetic seeking spiritual enlightenment, and the Enlightenment Christian alpinist—though it combined elements from all of these. Wigen cites “the potential of climbing to consolidate new identities and subjectivities” as one of its major attractions for Meiji alpinists, and argues that Meiji-period mountaineering had sociality as one of its primary characteristics.¹⁵ To be sure, Kojima Usui was outspoken in his encouragement of his countrymen to take advantage of their native peaks:

Summer vacation is a Sabbath that has been bestowed upon the masses. It must not to be wasted in gluttony and idleness. Why not make pilgrimage to the grand shrine of nature, there to praise the majesty of creation? If mountains be the point of contact between this world and heaven, then of grave import is their divine vocation, and for humanity to disregard this is beyond forgiveness.¹⁶

In this short piece, published in the literary journal *Bunko* 文庫 in 1906, Usui exhorts his compatriots to join him in exploring Japan’s mountains. Wigen connects this kind of mobilization effort to group hiking programs across the globe, where “rugged country was increasingly cast as a place to fortify both physical strength and native-place pride—and, by implication, to enhance young people’s fitness for imperial rule.”¹⁷ In one sense, then, the mountaineering subject was constructed as a Japanese subject.

The Meiji writer-mountaineer was also a romantic. Wigen mentions the impression Kitamura Tōkoku’s 北村透谷 (1868-1894) essay “Fugaku no shigami o omou” 富嶽の詩神を

¹⁵ Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” p. 5.

¹⁶ “Yama o sansuru bun,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 368.

¹⁷ Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” p. 4.

思ふ (Thoughts on Mount Fuji as muse), published in the inaugural issue of *Bungakukai* 文学界 (1893), had on Usui,¹⁸ and the influence the English Romantics had on Usui is a main focus of Fujioka Nobuko in her article on Usui.¹⁹ Usui was influenced early on by the poetry of Lord Byron (1788–1824), and was also deeply impressed by John Ruskin’s (1819–1900) praises of mountain beauty. Tanabe Jūji 田部重治 (1884–1972), another early writer of mountain literature, was a lecturer in English literature, specializing in William Wordsworth (1770–1850). The romantic influence on these writers is readily evident in their writings, both in the way they write about their experiences on the peaks and valleys, and in the intertextual references they choose to make: in Usui, quotations from Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), Wordsworth, and Ruskin are presented alongside those from the Confucian scholar Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666–1728) and the Six Dynasties Chinese poet Tao Yuanming 陶淵明 (365–427). These writers imbued their work with romantic notions of the sublime beauty of mountains and the personal experience of that beauty; but they were consummate men of letters, interweaving those foreign influences with ones closer to home and creating a uniquely Japanese literature of the mountains.

The Meiji alpinist was an explorer and an adventurer. While climbers like Usui and Tanabe were not the first ascensionists of many of the peaks they summited during the early years of Japanese climbing—in many cases, routes had already been established by local hunters or Buddhist monks who led pilgrims to the top—they were the first to do it in the style of modern mountaineers, with the sole purpose of getting to the top. “Why did I want to [climb Mount Yari]?” Usui begins his account of that trip. “Because it is high. Because it is sharp and

¹⁸ Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” 15. Kitamura Tōkoku was one of the leading figures of the early Japanese romantic movement. *Bungakukai* was the mouthpiece for Japanese romanticism in the early years of its publication.

¹⁹ Nobuko Fujioka, “Vision or Creation? Kojima Usui and the Literary Landscape of the Japanese Alps,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no. 4 (2002).

precipitous.”²⁰ For many Meiji mountaineers, the sense of adventure offered by the country’s uncharted crags was their true inspiration,²¹ even if their adventures resulted in literary or scientific products.

Notably, the early Japanese alpinist was not necessarily a paragon of masculinity. “[G]irls’ schools were one step ahead of boys’ schools in sponsoring climbs, sending their students to the mountains as early as 1902,” Wigen points out, and Usui himself, while certainly healthy enough to make it to the top, was a mild-mannered banker by day and by no means an athlete, a characteristic shared by most of the early climbers.²²

These identities and more made up the mountaineering subject who narrated the treks to the tops of Japan’s mountains that took place during the golden age of Japanese mountain climbing and writing.

Kojima Usui

This dissertation focuses on Kojima Usui, one of the key figures in the early stages of the Japanese modern mountaineering movement and his establishment of a Japanese literature of the mountains. By highlighting Kojima Usui, I do not mean to suggest that the mantle should merely be shifted from Walter Weston’s shoulders to Usui’s. Usui was the leading founder of the JAC and wrote extensively to encourage greater appreciation of Japan’s mountains; but it is his eclecticism that makes him ideal as a subject for this study. Involved as he was in the worlds of commerce, recreation, literature, and art, Usui embodies the excitement and complexity not only

²⁰ “Yarigatake tankenki” 槍ヶ岳探検記, in KUZS, v. 4, p. 9.

²¹ Even if “this terrain could hardly be characterized as a trackless wilderness” because of its history of habitation and use by hunters, farmers, and pilgrims, the lack of accurate maps and guidebooks until after the turn of the century meant that “the mountains of Nagano truly represented *terra incognita* except to local residents with first-hand knowledge.” Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” pp. 8–9.

²² Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” p. 24.

of Meiji mountaineering, but of the general trend of change that characterized Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Kojima Usui (Kojima Kyūta 久太 by birth) was born on December 29, 1873 in Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture, the eldest son of father Hironobu, a former retainer of Takamatsu Domain, and mother Saku. Hironobu moved the family to Tokyo in 1874, and then settled in Yokohama in 1878 and began his career with Yokohama Customs. Usui attended the Yokohama Commercial High School (*Yokohama shōgyō kōtō gakkō*), where he was introduced to international economics and began to develop his views of Japan's place in the global order. Spending his formative years in the port city of Yokohama, with the significant presence of foreign traders, diplomats, and other visitors from abroad, had a significant impact on his developing worldview, as evidenced in the essays he published as a student in coterie journals such as *Gakutō* 学燈. Usui became an employee of the Yokohama Specie Bank in 1896, where he worked until his retirement.

Usui submitted articles and essays to youth-oriented literary journals from a young age, especially *Shōnen'en* 少年園 (est. 1888). Usui submissions to *Bunko* 文庫 (a later incarnation of *Shōnen'en*) were being generally well received when his 1896 submission *Ichiyō joshi* 一葉女史 (Miss Ichiyō) garnered the attention of the magazine's editors, and the following year Usui joined the editorial board. It was at this time that Usui, at the recommendation of his mentor at the magazine Takizawa Shūgyō 滝沢秋暁 (1875–1957), took the penname “Usui.”²³

²³ Usui attributes the origin of this name to a sentence he wrote in a short article for *Bunko*, where he compared himself to a crow drowning in the water while trying to imitate a cormorant: “*U no mane o suru karasu mizu ni oboreru*” 鶇の真似をする鳥水に溺る. Though Shūgyō himself attributes the nickname to a passage to the same effect from the classical Chinese novel *Water Margin* (*Suikoden* 水滸伝).

Usui began traveling in the Kamakura and Sagami areas south and west of Yokohama, exploring the traditional famous spots on the Tōkaidō road. He began to take longer trips, venturing deeper into the hills and mountains west of Tokyo. His first major excursion was an 1898 solo hike up the Tamagawa River, starting from Ōme Station and trekking all the way to Enzan via the Yanagisawa Pass (1,472 m), after which he traveled by boat to Hakone. In 1899 he had his first experience of a serious mountain ascent when he climbed Mount Asama (2,568 m), and it was from this point that he began to engage more seriously in the exploration of Japan's tallest and deepest peaks that would be one of the defining aspects of his life.

As Usui climbed in the Japanese Alps (a name that was beginning to gain traction at that time) and other tall peaks of Japan's interior, his climbing activities and writing about them caught the attention of other mountaineers and would-be climbers, and a circle began to gather around Usui. In 1905, in collaboration with six other founders, with the support of the British Alpine Club via Walter Weston's (1860–1940) introduction, Usui established the Japanese Alpine Club. Usui worked as the editor of the club journal *Sangaku* 山岳 from its inauguration the following year until 1915, and was the first club President from 1931–1933 (until this time there was no appointed leadership).

In 1915, Usui was transferred by the Yokohama Specie Bank to the west coast of the United States, where he worked at the bank's branches in Seattle, San Francisco, and Los Angeles, while climbing in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges. He lived and worked in the United States until 1927, when he returned to Japan. After his return to Japan he and his family relocated to the Asagaya area of Tokyo, where he spent the remainder of his life. During this period he remained active in the literary and fine art scenes, publishing and helping to organize societies for research and appreciation of Edo-period woodblock printing and

watercolor painting. Though he was an armchair mountaineer for the last two decades of his life, he remained active in the JAC and the publication of mountain-related writing until he passed away in 1948.

Kojima Usui received a traditional education in the Chinese and Japanese classics before graduating from the Yokohama Commercial School, where he learned the latest in modern finance and commerce as these subjects were imported and adapted from the west. A banker by day, Usui rose through the ranks of the Yokohama Specie Bank, contributing to Japan's global economic growth while supporting his immediate and extended family; by night,²⁴ he wrote cultural and literary criticism, fiction and non-fiction prose, and edited for a variety of periodicals, most notably the literary magazine *Bunko* and the JAC's journal *Sangaku* 山岳, keeping abreast of literary developments in Japan and abroad and aspiring to make his own small contribution to those developments. Usui used his vacation time to explore the hills and mountains of Japan's interior. He devoted a great deal of time and energy to encouraging other Japanese to join him in taking advantage of their newfound leisure time to exercise in the mountains, to appreciate Japan's natural bounties, and to write about their experiences and observations.

This study will focus on the works of mountain writing and criticism that Usui published during the initial 15 years of the genre, when he had the most direct influence over its development. Usui published a great deal of mountain-related writing during this period, including the four-volume *Nihon Alps*. He continued to publish sporadically during his tenure in the United States, and published several more books during the period following his return to

²⁴ And Usui was most definitely a night owl—he joked on a questionnaire at a dinner party that his greatest strength was surviving on minimal nightly sleep. See Kondō Nobuyuki, *Kojima Usui jō: yama no fūryū shisha den* 小島烏水上 山の風流使者伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2012), p. 152.

Japan until his death in 1948. His later writings provide insight into how his ideas of the genre continued to develop, and his reflections on the early years of the JAC help clarify the history of mountain climbing and writing. My analysis of his earlier writings will allow for a tighter focus on how Usui's writing was actively involved in contemporary Meiji- and Taishō-period cultural discourses.

Kojima Usui has received some attention from scholars in recent years for his innovative approach to the genre of *kikōbun* (travel writing) and to the Japanese relationship to mountains. Kären Wigen and Nobuko Fujioka have published articles relating Usui's alpine and literary activities to notions of discovering or creating landscape; Kumagai Akihiro's 熊谷昭宏 dissertation²⁵ analyzes Kojima Usui's *kikōbun* alongside writing from other genres in an exploration of Usui's contribution to the consolidation of *kikōbun* as a modern genre. While Wigen and Fujioka offer novel interpretations of Usui's overall activities in relation to landscape, they do not engage in substantive analysis of how notions of modern landscape manifest in his texts. And though Kumagai's textual analysis is thorough, his conclusions do not reach beyond defining the genre of travel writing that Usui practiced and how it related to other literary trends. This belies the fact that Usui was relatively well-known and read by his contemporaries. My dissertation demonstrates the value his work has for furthering our understanding of the way Japanese literature was constructed in connection with various other cultural fields during Japan's modernization. More broadly, this project will contribute to our understanding of the way nature was conceptualized during the Meiji and Taishō periods, and what part the "discovery" of Japan's mountains played in the construction of Japan's natural landscapes.

²⁵ Kumagai Akihiro, "Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no 'shinpo' to janru no jiritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni" 明治後期における紀行文の「進歩」とジャンルの自立性—小島烏水の理論と実践を中心に (PhD dissertation, Dōshisha University, 2014).

Sangaku bungaku

Given that the years in which Kojima Usui was blazing the trail for Japanese mountain writing were the formative years of modern Japanese literature, genre categories were understandably in flux. It is therefore difficult to outline with any precision a relatively minor genre such as mountain literature. Nevertheless, there was a distinct practice of writing about the mountains emerging at this time, and this dissertation focuses specifically on this group of writings, so I will say a few words about the genre and its various appellations here. The first chapter will go into greater detail about the antecedents of the genre and the context in which it was conceived by Kojima Usui.

In her article on Usui, Nobuko Fujioka refers to “the modern genre of *sangaku kikōbun* 山岳紀行文 (alpine essay) or *sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学 (alpine literature).”²⁶ In his short retrospective of the early years of the genre, Tanabe Jūji uses various terms, including *sangaku bungaku*, *sangaku kikō* 山岳紀行 (alpine travelogue), *yama no bungaku* 山の文学 (literature of the mountains), *yama no kikō* 山の紀行 (travelogue of the mountains), and *tozan bungaku* 登山文学 (mountaineering literature).²⁷ Usui himself also employed various terms to refer to his writing on mountains, including many of those listed above and others besides.

In this dissertation I use terms such as mountain writing and mountain literature to refer in general to a variety of writing about mountains and mountaineering, centering on nonfiction narratives of mountain ascents, written by climbers and based on their own experiences in the mountains, but also including novels, reflective essays, scientifically-oriented essays, and other

²⁶ Fujioka, “Vision or Creation,” p. 288

²⁷ Tanabe Jūji, “Gendai sangaku bungaku ni tsuite” 現代山岳文学について, in *Yama to keikoku: shinpen*, ed. Kondō Nobuyuki (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1993), pp. 290–300.

non-narrative writing about the mountains. In most cases, I use *sangaku bungaku* to refer more specifically to an approach to writing about the mountains that I believe characterized Usui's work—which included both non-fiction narratives and non-narrative essays as separate but complementary parts of a generic whole—and the other works that appeared in the JAC community during the early years (roughly 1905–1915). The genre originated by Usui had more participants than just Usui, and it has continued as a living genre to the present,²⁸ so it must be understood throughout that it is not so simple to insist on a one-to-one equivalence between the term *sangaku bungaku* and the genre as practiced by Kojima Usui. I explore more closely the origins and variety of names and other genre classifications associated with this genre in Chapter One.

Rethinking nature in Meiji Japan

The research for this dissertation was originally inspired by a desire to explore how the Japanese relationship to the natural environment was expressed in literature during the period of modernization that characterized the Meiji era. The notion that the Japanese have a special connection to nature is a refrain that should be well-known to anybody who has spent time living in or studying Japan. The concept of *satoyama* discussed above is one example of this: as Knight points out, the *satoyama* represents “a sphere of nature in which nature and culture intersect... a more idyllic rural lifestyle of the past, when the Japanese ‘lived in harmony with nature.’”²⁹

²⁸ For example, Nakamura Makoto 中村誠 has examined the decline of the travelogue-oriented approach to the genre and the rise of mountain novels. See Nakamura Makoto, “‘Sangaku kikō’ no hassei/tenkai/teitai” 「山岳紀行」の発生・展開・停滞, *Nihon sangaku bunka gakkai ronshū* 日本山岳文化学会論集 no. 16 (2018): pp. 111–122; and Nakamura Makoto, *Yama no bungeishi 'Arupu' to Kushida Magoichi* 山の文芸誌「アルプ」と串田孫一, (Tokyo: Seikyūsha, 2014).

²⁹ Knight, “The Discourse of ‘Encultured Nature,’” p. 422.

Haruo Shirane has explored how this supposed Japanese harmony with nature was encoded into Japanese culture. In *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts*, Shirane breaks down the myth “that the Japanese have an inherent affinity with nature and that this affinity is one of the major characteristics of Japanese culture.”³⁰ He shows how the concept is apparent in Japanese texts ranging from Ki no Tsurayuki’s 紀貫之 preface to the *Kokin wakashū* 古今和歌集 (Collection of Japanese poems new and old, c. 905) to contemporary high school textbooks. Analyzing sources ranging from courtly poetry, to visual art, to the *satoyama* landscape and its depictions in various genres, Shirane argues that “secondary nature” (*nijiteki shizen* 二次的自然)—an elegant, codified version of nature packaged for human manipulation and consumption—was constructed in classical poetry and other genres and eventually diffused more widely by popular genres in the Edo period. Shirane’s treatment of the topic gives a thorough and convincing account of the way the culture of nature appreciation was instilled through premodern Japanese literature and the arts.

Shirane’s study begs the question: during the cultural sea change of the Meiji period, what kind of alterations did this culture of the four seasons undergo? Given that the myth is still alive and well in contemporary Japan, it seems likely that it was reasserted somehow in modern terms along with the establishment of Japan’s modern literary tradition.

Scholars in various fields have addressed the problem of nature in Meiji Japan. In *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology*, historian Julia Adeney Thomas argues that “nature’s implications for society—its prescription for the relations of power among human beings—mattered far more to most Meiji and Taishō writers than its

³⁰ Haruo Shirane, *Japan and the Culture of the Four Seasons: Nature, Literature, and the Arts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), p. 5.

scientific or ecological import.”³¹ For Meiji and Taishō intellectuals, Thomas argues, nature was important in more abstract terms, as the basis for natural law or fundamental human rights, as determining the natural course of Spencerian social evolution, or, in the guise of Japan’s physical landscape, as embodying the essential and timeless Japanese spirit. Rather than starting from a 21st-century ecological definition of nature, Thomas centers the term “nature” itself, aiming to “excavate the way Japanese thinkers’ use of nature shaped their ideas.”³² The socio-political understanding of the word that Thomas’s study reveals provides an important backdrop for the present study: if nature was primarily social and political for *most* writers, as Thomas says in the quotation above, then it had different meaning for the minority of writers that Thomas does not address. I argue Kojima Usui and other writers of mountain literature saw nature for more than its political implications (though it was certainly not without political and social implications even for them), and it is important to uncover the voices that expressed these alternative views of nature.

Studies in the history of science have also revealed changes in the way the Japanese related to their natural environment. The scientific import of nature was central to Meiji period efforts to modernize the nation. Scott L. Montgomery maintains that “the government...view[ed] scientific knowledge as the key to modernizing the country.”³³ New technologies improved communication and industry, new fields of science changed how knowledge was organized, and the creation of scientific societies around the turn of the century contributed to the standardization of scientific language, which until then had varied greatly between fields.³⁴

³¹ Julia Adeney Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity: Concepts of Nature in Japanese Political Ideology* (Berkeley, Calif.; London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 6.

³² Thomas, *Reconfiguring Modernity*, p. 6.

³³ Scott L. Montgomery, *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge through Cultures and Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 216.

³⁴ Montgomery, *Science in Translation*, pp. 220–23.

James Bartholomew focuses on the institutionalization of science in the modern period, showing how newly established fields of science and institutionalized, experimental approaches reorganized knowledge of nature.³⁵ The scholars in Morris Low's edited volume *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond* show various ways modern science and medicine were configured as ways of knowing more about the natural world, which in turn imbued them with the authority to be the foundation of government policy.³⁶ While these scholars have shown the important ways that science as a practice developed in the Meiji period, they do not reveal as much about how these institutional changes affected the broader cultural perception of nature and the human relationship to it. One of the goals of this dissertation is to consider these scientific advancements in tandem with contemporary developments in literary depictions of nature, to show the mutual effects the two had on changing concepts of nature.

Changing views of nature have also been discussed in Japanese literary studies. Perhaps the best known example of this is Karatani Kōjin's 柄谷行人 chapter on "the discovery of landscape" from his influential *The Origins of Modern Japanese Literature (Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen 日本近代文学の起源)*.³⁷ Karatani argues that writers in the later part of the Meiji period began to move away from the strict literary tradition of viewing nature through the lens of famous places, viewing landscape more objectively. The environment thus objectified became an external backdrop against which to project an internal self, leading to the discovery of interiority. Karatani describes an important process in the formation of a distinctly modern

³⁵ James R. Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan: Building a Research Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

³⁶ Morris Low, ed., *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

³⁷ Karatani Kōjin, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen: genpon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2009).

literary subject, and his work has been influential. Nobuko Fujioka, for example, takes Karatani's notion of landscape as the starting point for her study of Kojima Usui, arguing that Usui created the Japanese Alps as a literary landscape in his writing. While studies like these are important for their acknowledgement of the way that natural landscapes became objectified and commodified during the Meiji period, they do not go far enough in considering the way this affected the relationship between humans and the actual natural environment. In other words, many studies of literary "landscape" begin and end with the idea of an abstracted natural scene, and do not consider the ecological implications of human agents interacting with the physical spaces in which they live, work, and play.

Some scholars in Japanese literature have dealt with these issues. In *When Our Eyes no Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism*, Gregory Golley establishes a strong link between literary modernism and the science and ethics of ecology, focusing on the works of Miyazawa Kenji 宮沢賢治 (1896–1933), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 谷崎潤一郎 (1886–1965), and Yokomitsu Riichi 横光利一 (1898–1947).³⁸ Karen Colligan-Taylor's *The Emergence of Environmental Literature in Japan* surveys the history of environmental literature—that is, literature with an overt ethical stance towards environmentalism or conservation—locating the origins of that genre in Miyazawa Kenji.³⁹ Both of these studies, however, begin their coverage in the late Taishō period; as such, they cannot account for the changes that took place during the important Meiji years, when both literature and science were undergoing significant changes as a part of Japan's modernization.

³⁸ Gregory Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* 296 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008).

³⁹ Karen Colligan-Taylor, *The Emergence of Environmental Literature in Japan* (New York: Garland, 1990).

Monuments to nature: Mountain literature and the natural environment

In this dissertation, I explore the genre of mountain literature as conceived of by Kojima Usui, in order to better understand the way nature was related to by Meiji-period Japanese writers and intellectuals. This genre is particularly well-suited to this kind of investigation because of its close connection to a number of different fields that were central to the modernization efforts undertaken during the Meiji period. Mountain writing and recreation emerged at the nexus of a diverse array of fields—including but not limited to science, technology, literature, fine art, conservation, folklore studies, imperial expansion—and following the threads that connect it to these various subjects can provide new perspectives on them, opening up previously unexplored avenues for research into the changes that defined Meiji Japan. The chapters of this dissertation touch on all of these fields and more, with a particular focus on literature, science, and visual art.

In the first chapter, I examine Kojima Usui's efforts to craft *sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学, a Japanese literature of the mountains. This effort to define a new genre of mountain writing provides a fascinating case study of the Meiji-period struggle to create a national literature that could address the issues faced by individuals in a modernizing Japan. In his attempt to define a literary niche for writing about nature and mountains, Usui had to navigate a complex web of nascent modern genres and writing styles such as *shasei* 写生 (literary sketching) and *shōsetsu* 小説 (prose fiction), Japan's classical literary tradition, and an established international mountain literature. Usui deployed the *kikōbun* 紀行文 (travel writing) genre to both align himself with and differentiate himself from existing traditions and trends. Setting his idiosyncratic conception of the *kikōbun* genre in opposition to the novelistic *shōsetsu*, Usui argued that since the latter's focus was on human psychology and society, the former should be renovated to focus on nature, and be elevated to a level on par with the *shōsetsu*. Usui argued not

only for a new approach to *kikōbun*, but for an alternative structure to the literary hierarchy that was in the process of being established during the Meiji period. Usui's efforts to restructure the hierarchy of literary genres was ultimately unsuccessful, but he was an influential writer and critic of the *kikōbun* genre, and his focus on specifically mountain-related writing resulted in *sangaku bungaku*, a genre that, though relatively unknown among general readers or scholars, remains vibrant and popular among enthusiasts even today. His writings on *kikōbun* and his participation in the genre debates that occurred in the literary world during the last two decades of Meiji provide a fresh look at the intricate literary innovations that took place in Meiji Japan.

In Chapter Two, I consider the relationship between science and literature through the creative approach Kojima Usui took to the meeting of these two fields. In this chapter, I focus on the way ideas such as “scientist” and “scientific knowledge” are constituted in Usui's writings on literature, and how his appropriation and application of such ideas can be understood in the context of the history of science as well as of literature. I show both how the context of Usui's writing shaped the way he and his contemporaries understood these concepts, and how Usui used specific rhetorical strategies to construct these ideas in order to bolster his literary project of elevating *kikōbun*. One of Usui's aims with his *kikōbun* was to create a literature of nature that depicted natural scenes faithful to the actual experience of an authorial subject. At the same time, there was a rise in demand for realism and authenticity in literature. I argue in this chapter that Usui turned to science as a way of giving authority and authenticity to his natural descriptions. Despite the parallel development of modern literature and modern science in the Meiji period, little work has been done on the interaction between these two fields. This interaction is clearly visible in Usui's work, and he received both criticism and praise for his novel use of scientific language and description in his travel writing. Usui's interest in the literary applications of

scientific knowledge was shared by other Meiji intellectuals, and was part of the broader popular reception of science in Meiji Japan.

In the final chapter, I look at the way that concepts from visual art influenced Usui's mountain literature, and how this combined with the scientific gaze discussed in the previous chapter to contribute to a unique view of natural space. In addition to being an influential *kikōbun* author and critic, Usui was an accomplished collector of Japanese and Western art, and his studies of Edo-period woodblock print artists were groundbreaking early examples of an academic fine-arts approach to Japan's historical visual culture. He also had extensive connections to the art world through his personal relationships with artists, especially those who were also members of the JAC. In this chapter, I provide the context for Usui's interest in visual art, and analyze his writing to see how the visual arts influenced his approach to literary art. I argue that by adapting ideas of composition and color from painting and sketching to his literary depictions of nature, and by supplementing the text with visual elements such as sketches, photographs, and maps, Usui imbued his *kikōbun* with a visual quality that suggests the connection between the literary depiction and a real-life experience of a natural landscape. Blending the subjective perspective of the viewing author/mountaineer with an underpinning of objective (read: scientific) knowledge about the natural features described, Usui crafted a literature that privileged natural description, while acknowledging the intervening role of the human subject in objectifying and reproducing images of the natural environment. By combining artistic theories and notions of scientific knowledge in his literary critique and practice, Usui made visible scenes of nature that had not previously been considered worth seeing or representing. Usui was a central figure in crafting a modern mountain aesthetic, and in situating mountains within the landscape of the modern Japanese nation.

In a sense, Usui “discovered” Japan’s mountains, repositioning them as a medium through which to explore the network of interrelations between humans, nature, science, and art. In the same way, I argue for Usui’s key role in helping us rediscover and reexamine the complex networks that connected discourse on science, art, and nature in early 20th-century Japan. In this dissertation, I analyze Usui’s texts and other writing associated with mountain literature and place them within their broader contexts, providing new perspectives from which to view the excitement of invention and discovery that was taking place in Japan at the turn of the 20th century. I argue that Japanese mountain literature, though it was and remains outside the literary mainstream, provides a unique perspective not only on Meiji-period debates about what modern Japanese literature should be, but also sheds light on how Japanese in the Meiji period related to their natural environment.

Chapter One: “The Novelty of Nature: Kojima Usui and Hierarchies of Genre in Modern Japanese Literature”

An eastern pale clouded yellow [butterfly, *Colias erate*] approached the flowing water, dancing lightly right and left. It seemed as if the light purple of the water and the yellow of the butterfly combined momentarily to create a double-flowering violet, but then the butterfly cut leisurely away from the surface, while the water flowed freely on. To a human’s eyes, the rough surface of the rapids was clear enough to see through—some of the stones on the river floor looked like eyes, some looked like small bunches of pine resin, some shone like enamel. The butterfly, however did not see the water, but looked only at the stones; it did not see the stones, looking only at the reflection of its own beautiful yellow wings...

—Kojima Usui, “Azusagawa no jōryū” 梓川の上流

In an introductory essay for *Nihon Arupusu daihikan* 日本アルプス第二巻 (The Japanese Alps, Volume 2, 1911), Kojima Usui 小島烏水 (1873–1948) writes, “This meager literary project of mine (if it can be so called) is founded on my desire to plant the unique flowers gathered in the alpine mountains on the plain of the literary arts.”¹ The image he paints of transplanting the uncommon bloom of his alpine writing into the expansive plain of more mainstream literature points to a central tension in much of his writing on the genre.² On one hand, Usui envisioned his literature of the mountains as the tonic necessary to reinvigorate a stymied modern literature that had become separated from nature. By the early twentieth century this was essentially the literature of the *shōsetsu* 小説, and Usui proposed his mountain travel literature as an alternative

¹ Kojima Usui, “Hakone sanchū yori (jo ni kau)” 箱根山中より (序に代ふ), in vol. 7 of *Kojima Usui zenshū* 小島烏水全集 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1979) [hereafter KUZS], p. 3.

² The contrast here between the mountains and the plains is a common trope in Usui’s writing about mountain literature. He develops the idea more fully in “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu” 自然描写の芸術 (The art of nature description, 1910), where he discusses Kunikida Doppo’s 国木田独歩 (1871–1908) *Musashino* 武蔵野 (1898) and Ivan Turgenev’s (1818–1883) *A Sportsman’s Sketches* (1852) in terms of their relationship to the environment in which they are set—the Musashino Plain and the Central Russian Upland, respectively. He argues that most art of the past has been a product of the plains and the human development of that environment, and that a rediscovery of beauty in the relatively undeveloped nature of the mountains is necessary if art is to be revitalized. See Kojima Usui, “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu,” in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 141–51.

to that genre. In this chapter, I will introduce the *sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学 (mountain literature, mountain writing) genre as Kojima Usui described and practiced it—and the important role the *kikōbun* 紀行文 (travel writing) genre played in his development of *sangaku bungaku*—during the period 1899–1915. At the heart of Usui’s efforts to construct a genre of mountain writing was a desire to make a lasting contribution to the burgeoning field of modern Japanese literature.

On the other hand, as Usui himself frequently complained, the mountains were of little consequence to the general Japanese public or the literary elite, and it was no simple task to elevate mountain literature to the level of the dominant *shōsetsu*. The genre of *kikōbun*, however, was a well-established traditional genre that still had a number of writers and readers in the Meiji period (1868–1912). Usui therefore situated his mountain writing within the broader genre of *kikōbun* travel writing; at the same time, he was highly critical of the traditional approach to the genre, and sought to retool *kikōbun* into a more modern genre that could compete with the *shōsetsu*. The result was—and continues to be—referred to by a variety of names, but thematically it was a literature of the mountains, written about alpine environments by individuals who experienced them firsthand.

The terms used by Usui, his contemporaries, and later scholars to refer to Usui’s writings about mountains have varied widely. While Usui most commonly used the terms *sangaku bungaku* and *kikōbun* to refer to his mountain writing, critics, other writers, and even Usui himself also used terms such as *shizen bungaku* 自然文学 (nature writing), *sangaku kikōbun* 山岳紀行文 (mountain travel writing), and *sangaku shōsetsu* 山岳小説 (mountain novel). These labels were applied haphazardly, and even appear arbitrary at times, but they had significant implications for how the genre fit into the hierarchy of modern Japanese literature.

This project of genre definition was part and parcel of the larger project within the Meiji *bundan* 文壇, or literary world, of adapting and adopting forms both new and old to forge a Japanese literary tradition. *Kokubungaku* 国文学 scholars sought to establish a classical Japanese literary canon as a legitimate subject for academic study,³ while writers and intellectuals attempted to negotiate between the western novel and poetry and newly emergent genres such as the *shōsetsu* and haiku.⁴

I will introduce some of these terms and discuss their significance in the various contexts in which they have been used. In the case of Usui and his contemporaries, I contend that terms were deployed strategically and meaningfully, with the aim of situating Usui's work within larger literary contexts. Usui was following a specific rhetorical strategy whereby mountain writing was both aligned with *kikōbun* but also distinguished from it, which allowed it to be set against the *shōsetsu*; Usui's critics used generic terms to grant Usui's writing a level of autonomy and novelty, while clearly setting his work outside of mainstream *shōsetsu* literature. Later scholarly treatment of Usui and mountain literature has been less precise and less critical with terminology, but ultimately seems to have inherited, whether consciously or not, an approach that views mountain writing as "genre literature," a distinguishable yet undistinguished mode of writing about nature that exists outside of the literary mainstream.

In parallel with my discussion of the terminology surrounding the genre of mountain writing, I will consider the valence each term had with various literary contexts. Of particular

³ For more on the *kokubungaku* movement, see Michael C. Brownstein, "From Kokugaku to Kokubungaku: Canon-Formation in the Meiji Period," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47, no. 2 (1987): pp. 435–60.

⁴ The term *shōsetsu* has been at the center of debates about Japanese literature from its popularization in the Meiji period until the present; for example, see Atsuko Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment: The Production of "Literature" in Meiji Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007). Many other genres have also been discussed in their Meiji historical context; see, for example, Marvin Marcus's discussion of biography in the Japanese literary tradition, Marvin Marcus, *Paragons of the Ordinary: The Biographical Literature of Mori Ōgai* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993). I will discuss *shōsetsu* in greater detail below.

import are precursors or prototypes of the genre in premodern Japanese literature, especially *kikōbun*; the significance, if any, mountain writing had as one of many genres competing for readers and prestige during the foundational years of modern literature in Japan; and counterparts to Japanese mountain and nature writing in Europe and America.

Much of the previous scholarship on Usui has focused heavily on how he was influenced by John Ruskin (1819–1900) and Shiga Shigetaka 志賀重昂 (1863-1927). While their importance to Usui’s work is undeniable, too tight a focus on these two men obscures the broader contexts—in particular, Meiji literary development and the global spread of mountaineering—to which Usui was responding. Kojima Usui conceived *sangaku bungaku* at the epicenter of Meiji *bundan* debates about the nature of modern literature and what genres constituted its most pure form, and it provides an as-yet unexplored generic node, a jumping-off point from which to consider the interactions and relations among such important Meiji literary topics as literary sketching, naturalism, and the *shōsetsu*. The Meiji period was a turbulent time, during which new ideas and technologies were adopted and adapted, all the while competing with notions of Japanese tradition. Usui and his genre of mountain writing provide a case study for better understanding the complex negotiations that took place during this innovative period in Japanese history, both within literature and in Japanese society more broadly.

Testing the limits of traditional *kikōbun*

Early in his career, Usui wrote squarely within the *kikōbun* tradition. He recalls that his true passion for writing began when he started composing *kikōbun*. In his 1907 essay “Kikōbun-ron” 紀行文論 (On *kikōbun*), he briefly recounts how he was inspired to travel by reading the travel

accounts of Edo period writers like Kyokutei Bakin 曲亭馬琴 (1767-1848) and Rai San'yō 頼山陽 (1780-1832), so he began his wandering in the Kamakura and Sagami areas. He tried his hand at writing short stories based on his experiences, but his concern over his social reputation led him towards *kikōbun* instead—he explains that when he was starting out, novel-writing was not considered quite as respectable as now, in 1907.⁵

Usui's early works appear to follow a classical approach to *kikōbun*: they are characterized by an ornate *bibun* 美文 (literally, beautiful writing) style, intertextual references to traditional Japanese and Chinese poetry and travel literature, and a marked interest in the human history of the places he visits. In “Tamagawa o sakanoboru ki” 多摩川を遡る記 (Record of traveling up the Tamagawa River), which appeared in his first published book *Sentō shōkei* 扇頭小景 (Scenes from the end of a folding fan, 1900), Usui recounts a long journey, mostly by foot, from Ōme Station to the traditional scenic destination of Shōsenkyō, then by boat down the Fuji River. The following is a typical descriptive passage from that work.

A boulder like the shell of a tortoise was immersed in the river; its base was a crystalline, almost transparent white, and where it towered out of the water it looked like an amber hue fading to yellow...the water flowing below me spluttered and flew, and a fortress of stones were thrust into the ground like an array of firearms and blades. The howling, like 10,000 horses champing in unison, shook the mountains themselves.⁶

The language is classical: much of the prose is in a *kanbun kundokutai* 漢文訓読体 (Chinese-style prose transposed into Japanese grammatical forms) style, and includes heavy use

⁵ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 370-71.

⁶ *Kikō no gotoki kyogan, mizu ni hitashitaru ne wa shiroku tōrite suishō no shizumitaramu gotoku, mizu o nuite takaku kitsuritsu suru tokoro wa kohaku no kiirō sukoshiku asete miyu...kyakka no suisei hontō hisha, hō o tsurane yaiba o uetaru gotoki ishi no jōkaku o tsuki, kosei sangaku o shinkan shite banba tagai ni kamu.* 亀甲の如き巨巖、水に浸したる根は白く透りて水晶の沈みたらむ如く、水を挺て昂く屹立するところは琥珀の黄色少しく褪せて見ゆ [中略] 脚下の水勢奔騰飛瀉、砲を列ね刃を植ゑたる如き石の城廓を衝き、呼聲山嶽を震撼して萬馬互に嚙む。 “Tamagawa o sakanoboru ki,” in KUZS, v. 1, p. 29.

of idiomatic, figurative language and complicated two- and four-character compounds. Other sections read more like the flowing, pun-laden comic *gesaku* 戯作 literature of the Edo period.⁷

The work is also highly intertextual, including traditional literary references such as Matsuo Bashō 松尾芭蕉 (1644-1694) and several of his disciples, Yosa Buson 与謝蕪村 (1716-1784), the Confucian *Analects*, Li Bai 李白 (701-762), Rai San'yō, and the local gazetteer, to name but a few.

He does describe the natural scenery he encounters, and even mentions an attempt to sketch (whether he means a drawn or a written sketch is unclear) when he is near Shōsenkyō. But he also devotes large sections of the piece to reflections on the tragic fates of historical figures associated with the locales he visits. The sight of castle ruins prompts a soliloquy on the medieval warlords Takeda Shingen 武田信玄 (1521–1573) and Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉 (1537–1598),⁸ and he devotes several pages to a sharp condemnation of Oyamada Nobushige's 小山田信茂 (1545–1582) betrayal of Takeda Katsuyori 武田勝頼 (1546–1582) when he encounters the former's grave.⁹

Even in these earliest pieces Usui is arguably moving away from traditional *kikōbun* and forging a new path for the genre. In his 2014 dissertation “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no “shinpo” to janru no dokuritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni” 明治後期における紀行文の「進歩」とジャンルの自立性—小島烏水の理論と実践を中心に (Late-Meiji *kikōbun* “development” and genre autonomy: on the theory and praxis of Kojima Usui), Kumagai Akihiro 熊谷昭宏 argues that in these early *kikōbun*, Usui was primarily interested in

⁷ One such episode recounts Usui's interaction with a fellow traveler at a roadside inn. See “Tamagawa o sakanoboru ki,” in KUZS, v. 1, p. 41.

⁸ “Tamagawa o sakanoboru ki,” in KUZS, v. 1, p. 19.

⁹ “Tamagawa o sakanoboru ki,” in KUZS, v. 1, pp. 35–38.

approaching the scenes he encountered and depicted through the lens of “history.”¹⁰ Kumagai considers Usui’s 1898 essay “*Nihon meishōki o yomite Reisui no kikōbun o hyōsu*” 日本名勝記を読み麗水の紀行文を評す (A reading of *Nihon meishōki* and an evaluation of Reisui’s *kikōbun*) the earliest articulation of Usui’s *kikōbun* theory. In the essay, Usui complains of the abundant factual inaccuracies that he sees as staining the authenticity of established *kikōbun* writer Chizuka Reisui’s 遅塚麗水 (1867-1942) work. According to Kumagai, Usui’s *kikōbun* theory at this time was based on the principle that “*kikōbun* must be written on a foundation of *correct* historical knowledge of the locality that is the object of travel.”¹¹ “Correct” (*tadashii* 正しい in the original) is a keyword here: For Usui, the primary value of a *kikōbun* was in its “authenticity,” or the extent to which it faithfully described a location, and this authenticity could only be guaranteed by research into the history of a location and firsthand experience of the place. In “Sannōdai hōgo—*kikōbun* to rekishi,” 山王台放語—紀行文と歴史 (Notes from Sannōdai—*kikōbun* and history, 1899) he goes so far as to say that *kikōbun* themselves should be consulted as primary historical records: “If someone wishes to gather all possible material about a locality, the first thing I would recommend is the *kikōbun* about that place.”¹²

This equation of history and *kikōbun* by Usui contrasts the more conventional view of *kikōbun*’s function. Whereas Usui was concerned with the factual inaccuracies in contemporary *kikōbun*, Kumagai points out that this does not seem to be what contemporary readers were interested in. He compares advertisements for *kikōbun* volumes by Chizuka Reisui and Ōhashi Otowa 大橋乙羽 (1869–1901); as advertisements they would obviously not be critical of the

¹⁰ Kumagai Akihiro, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no “shinpo” to janru no jiritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni” (PhD dissertation, Dōshisha University, 2014).

¹¹ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 15. Emphasis in original.

¹² Kojima Usui, “Sannōdai hōgo—*kikōbun* to rekishi,” *Bunko* 12, no. 3 (1899), quoted in Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, pp. 20–21.

works in the way that a review might be, but what they highlight is notable: the “selling point,” according to Kumagai, is that “the reader ‘can feel as if he himself is enjoying the place.’”¹³ In other words, the typical *kikōbun* was expected to entertain an armchair-traveler reader, even if it did so at the expense of relating the author’s authentic experiences.

Another defining feature of *kikōbun* from the Meiji period and earlier was the characteristic writing style. *Kikōbun* were expected to be written in the flowery *bibun* prose style, to such an extent that “*kikōbun*=*bibun* was the standard schema.”¹⁴ This association between the genre of *kikōbun* and the writing style its writers were expected to employ was so tight that *kikōbun* works were arguably judged more on the merit of their facility with language than on the contents of the story. Indeed, Usui himself was reviewed according to the *bibun* standard early in his career.¹⁵ As Kumagai explains:

Including the works of [leading *kikōbun* authors like Ōmachi Keigetsu, Chizuka Reisui, and Kōda Rohan 幸田露伴 (1867–1947)], at the time *kikōbun* were evaluated primarily on the level of the ‘sentence’ [*bunshō* 文章] (or even ‘letter’ [*moji* 文字])...from the end of the Meiji 30s to the beginning of the Meiji 40s [c. 1903–1910] writers gradually began to question [this standard]...Usui was one of those who began casting doubt on the *bibun-kikōbun* model from a relatively early period.¹⁶

Clearly Usui was dissatisfied with the traditional *kikōbun* model, and sought to update the genre to meet new, modern criteria.

It should be noted that Usui’s early insistence on history as the anchoring feature of *kikōbun*’s authenticity does invite comparisons with another mainstay of *kikōbun*, and premodern literary culture in general: the *meisho* 名所. *Meisho*, or “famous place,” refers to a place of scenic beauty or historical significance that has been indexed alongside other famous places as a

¹³ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, pp. 19–20.

¹⁴ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 41.

¹⁵ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 41n1.

¹⁶ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 41.

suitable topic for poetic rumination and commentary in the traditional literary canon.¹⁷ Stopping over at various *meisho* on journeys between the capital and the provinces and composing poetry on the occasion became popular as these sites became established through important classical works like *Ise monogatari* 伊勢物語 (Tales of Ise, c. 980) and *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (The Tale of Genji, c. 1010), and from the medieval period, journeys with the express purpose of visiting famous places and composing poetry responding to the history of those places were a pastime among the aristocracy and clergy,¹⁸ and by the Edo period had even spread to the rest of the population.¹⁹

Edward Kamens has shown in his study of *utamakura* 歌枕²⁰ that the contextualization of poetic production on the locale about which it is written has the effect of inscribing the poem on the scene. Writing an original poem in response not only, or even primarily, to one's subjective experience of the scene, but more importantly to the more famous poems of the past, was a way of participating in the making of history—in this case, the poetic history of a particular locale. In other words, traveling to and writing about *meisho*, with their extensive intertextual networks, had the effect of adding one's own poem to the poetic lineage of the place.

To be clear, Usui was not interested in *meisho* as such; indeed, he specifically rejected an approach to traveling and writing that privileged the clichéd famous places. Yet his early focus

¹⁷ See Laura Nenzi, “Cultured Travelers and Consumer Tourists in Edo-Period Sagami,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 59, no. 3 (September 1, 2004): pp. 285–319, for a discussion of the changing role of *meisho* in Edo-period travel and travel literature.

¹⁸ Well-known examples include Nun Abutsu's 阿仏尼 (c. 1222–1283) *Izayoi nikki* 十六夜日記 (Diary of the waning moon, 1279–80) and Matsuo Bashō's *Oku no hosomichi* 奥の細道 (The narrow road to the deep north, 1702).

¹⁹ Jippensha Ikku's 十返舎一九 (1765–1831) *Tōkaidōchū hizakurige* 東海道中膝栗毛 (Shank's mare, 1802–1822) is a well-known comedic treatment of the misadventures of two commoners traveling along the highway between Edo and Kyoto. For more on commoner travel during the Edo period, see Nenzi, “Cultured Travelers and Consumer Tourists” and Laura Nenzi, *Excursions in Identity: Travel and the Intersection of Place, Gender, and Status in Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).

²⁰ Similar to *meisho*, *utamakura* (pillow words) are special words, especially place names, that are tied to particular locations and carry specific allusions or connotations about the associated place. See Edward Kamens, *Utamakura, Allusion, and Intertextuality in Traditional Japanese Poetry* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).

on history suggests a strong connection to *meisho*-centered *kikōbun* of old. In the same way that earlier poets and travelers inscribed their own name on the “history” of a place by contributing to its poetic lineage, “the circumstances of the scenery observed by the traveling narrator and of his movements are narrated as the work of affirming the past ‘history’ of a particular place.”²¹ Not only the scenery, but also the narrator’s movement through it, become inseparable from the history of the place itself, arguably becoming a part of that history.

Into the mountains: Towards a new *kikōbun*

In the decade following Usui’s first explication of his *kikōbun* theory, Usui’s theory and praxis went through a number of changes. As Usui explored higher and deeper mountains, including Mount Asama (2,568 m) and Mount Norikura (3,026 m), he began to orient his own *kikōbun* towards his burgeoning interest in mountain aesthetics and recreation. In an attempt to inspire wider interest in exploring and writing about the relatively unknown peaks of Japan’s interior, beginning in 1901 Usui made a number of abortive attempts to inspire a new kind of travel writing. Kumagai points out an important shift in “Honran ni tsukite” 本欄に就きて (About this column), a piece published in the youth literary magazine *Bunko*’s 文庫²² *kikōbun* column in January 1901. Usui characterizes “*kikōbun* of the past” as “merely one kind of *bibun*,” and argues that “future *kikōbun*” should include closer attention to things like flora, fauna, geology, meteorology, and so on—conspicuously missing from this list is “history,” a notable development considering Usui’s earlier focus on this keyword.²³

²¹ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 26.

²² Usui had been a regular contributor to *Bunko* since his student days, and joined the editorial board in 1897.

²³ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 26.

In line with this vision for “future *kikōbun*,” Usui called for mountain-oriented *kikōbun* in “Tozan annai o tsunoru bun” 登山案内と募る文 (A call for mountain guidebooks), published in *Bunko* in July 1902. There was of course a practical element to this exhortation for useful mountain guidebooks²⁴: Usui was promoting mountaineering as a leisure activity for the larger Japanese population, but the maps and guides available to would-be climbers were essentially useless, if they existed at all—in contrast to the guidebooks available in the English language, including *A Handbook for Travellers in Central and Northern Japan*.²⁵ Given its heavy focus on objective information such as the train stations, villages, and rivers that one should use as landmarks during an ascent of a given mountain, Kumagai hesitates to consider Usui’s “guidebook” style as a proposal for a new kind of *kikōbun*, arguing that it is distinct from *kikōbun*, or a subgenre at best.²⁶ But Kumagai notes that Usui’s specific warning that the *tozan annai-ki* 登山案内記 (mountain guidebook) writing that he is looking for “should not imitate conventional *kikōbun* and travel tales [*ryokō-dan* 旅行談]”²⁷ suggests that they might be a kind

²⁴ Usui’s interest in creating guidebooks for mountain travel was part of a broad popular interest in travel guides during the Meiji period. For a discussion of the great popularity of the guidebook genre in Meiji Japan, see Goi Makoto 五井信, “Sho o mote, tabi ni deyō: Meiji sanjū-nendai no tabi to <gaido bukku> <kikōbun>” 書を持って、旅に出よう—明治三〇年代の旅と〈ガイドブック〉〈紀行文〉—, *Modern Japanese Literature*, no. 63 (2000): pp. 31–44.

Europe had seen its own guidebook boom earlier in the 19th century; see Rudy Koshar, “‘What Ought to Be Seen’: Tourists’ Guidebooks and National Identities in Modern Germany and Europe,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 33, no. 3 (1998): pp. 323–40. It is unclear to what extent Usui was influenced by western guidebooks, though he often references the relatively high level of information available to would-be mountain climbers in Europe as compared to Japan. By 1905, at least, he was aware of Murray’s *Handbook* (see note below) and Francis Galton’s *The Art of Travel* (London: John Murray, 1855): In *Nihon sansui-ron* 日本山水論 (On Japanese nature, 1905), Usui noted their influence on Shiga Shigetaka—in *Nihon fūkei-ron* 日本風景論 (On Japanese landscape, 1894), Shiga famously borrowed from Murray and Galton liberally and without citation.

²⁵ *A Handbook for Travellers in Central and Northern Japan* was first published by Kelly in Yokohama in 1881; from the third edition it was published by John Murray in London. For more on the *Handbook*, see Valerie Hamilton, “The Development of Mountaineering in Meiji Japan: From the Arrival of Western Influences to the Formation of the Japanese Alpine Club” (master’s thesis, University of Stirling, 1996), pp. 49–53.

Usui writes frequently about the low quantity and quality of information on mountains and mountaineering in Japan. See, for example, “Tozan ni tsukite” 登山に就きて, in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 437–45.

²⁶ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, p. 30. Emphasis mine.

²⁷ “Tozan annai o tsunoru bun,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 461.

of *unconventional kikōbun*; Kumagai concludes that the call for “mountain guidebooks” was at least one part in the ongoing development of Usui’s larger *kikōbun* theory.²⁸

Shortly after, he opened a new column in *Bunko* called “Sansui-dan” 山水談 (Landscapes; literally, “tales of mountains and rivers”), as a home for other writers who might be interested in a more modern travel literature. Valerie Hamilton, whose thesis focuses on the development of mountaineering as a sport during the Meiji period, suggests that this column was designed “to distinguish the new genre of writing about climbing mountains from the traditional style of travel writing with its long history and more recent refinement in the Meiji period.”²⁹ In setting the guidelines for the new column, Usui warns potential contributors that “we will not take up those kinds of *kikōbun* that expound at length upon the origins of *meisho* and other historic spots that everybody already knows about.”³⁰ Usui was attempting to shift the focus away from the human history of famous places that had been established in the poetic canon, to encourage a new *kikōbun* that explored less-traveled areas of Japan.

Tozan annai-ki and *sansui-dan* were Usui’s first attempts to institutionalize writing about mountains. Unfortunately, just as his own mountaineering and mountain writing were in their early stages, so was the general state of the sport in Meiji Japan, and the lack of a broader interest in mountains meant that these early attempts ended in abject failure. Usui announced the end of his search for mountain guidebook writing after only four months, during which time he had only received a single submission. As for the “Sansui-dan” column, “it was some time before he began to receive the type of contributions he wanted and for a while he wrote much of

²⁸ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, pp. 30–31.

²⁹ Hamilton, “Development of Mountaineering in Meiji Japan,” pp. 136–37.

³⁰ “Honran ni tsukite, in *KUZS*, v. 4, p. 454.

this section himself.”³¹ Usui’s biographer Kondō Nobuyuki 近藤信行 enumerates the other travel writers who were working at *Bunko* at the time, and concludes that until the other founding members of the Japanese Alpine Club (*Nihon sangakukai* 日本山岳会) made their appearance in the years to come, Usui was the only mountain writer worthy of the name.³²

Regardless of their effect on *Bunko*’s readership, the vision of *kikōbun* expressed in these columns marks a clear break in Usui’s approach to the genre. It was at this time, argues Kondō, that “Usui first began trying to place ‘mountains’ within the territory [of *kikōbun* literature].”³³ As Usui traveled more broadly, his interest shifted from human history and the traces it had left on the landscape, to natural manifestations of beauty in the landscape itself. At the same time, he adapted his *kikōbun* theory to the changing literary atmosphere and in response to experiments in his own writing. These efforts culminated in his most thorough-going evaluation of the art of the *kikōbun*, and the position of the genre in the hierarchy of contemporary Japanese literature, in two essays: “Kikōbun-ron” (On *kikōbun*, September 1907) and “Kikōbun shōron” 紀行文小論 (A few words on *kikōbun*, December 1907).

Knowledge of nature: A defense of science in literature

As Usui moved away from “history” as an anchor for narrative authenticity in *kikōbun*, he had begun to incorporate more “science” into his writing. As noted above, the 1901 “Honran ni tsukite” article already showed a shift away from history, and the foregrounding of “geology, weather, flora, fauna, and astronomy” as the proper elements for the kind of “precise record and

³¹ Hamilton, “Development of Mountaineering in Meiji Japan,” 137.

³² Kondō Nobuyuki, *Kojima Usui jō: yama no fūryū shisha den* 小島烏水 上山の風流使者伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2012), p. 145.

³³ Kondō, *Kojima Usui jō*, p. 143.

critique” that Usui sought in the new *kikōbun* showed the more scientific, observational direction in which he wanted to lead the genre.³⁴ In “Yarigatake tanken-ki” 鎗ヶ嶽探検記 (Account of an expedition to Mount Yari, 1903), Usui devotes the second of ten sections to a detailed description of the geological and geographical context of the mountain, including a discussion of Japan’s major mountain ranges and waterways, the geology of Mount Yari (3,180 m), and a list of the elevations of Japan’s highest mountains. Descriptions of scenery throughout the narrative are detailed in naming specific natural phenomena such as tree species and rock types, and discussing their relative aesthetic effects on the landscape.

For example, on his way up the Azusa River Usui visits Onigashiro (Demon’s castle), the largest cave on a “cliff face overgrown with twisting verdure, which was pocked with holes like insect-bitten burdock leaves.” He explains that the tunnels, columns, and caves are the result of the interaction between the running water and the limestone cliffs, comparing the rock inside the cave to “half-melted pewter” and commenting that “the tinkling of the water running over top of the rocks was chilling to the bone.”³⁵

On the whole, Usui’s publications during the first decade of his career garnered attention and praise for his approach to the human-nature relationship, especially as he explored it in an alpine context. His passion and dedication to mountains earned him the title of *Yama hakase* 山博士 (Professor Peak) among his cohort at *Bunko*;³⁶ his writing inspired a generation of young

³⁴ “Honran ni tsukite,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 453.

³⁵ “Yarigatake tanken-ki,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 69.

³⁶ So called by Irako Suzushiro 伊良子清白 (1877–1946) in a poem published in the same issue of *Bunko* as the first installment of “Yarigatake tanken-ki”: “The traveler Usui, Professor Peak / Goes out from the city into the autumn wind / Lamenting the snows at the Shinshū-Hida line / He built up these crystal bones [of prose].” See Kondō, *Kojima Usui jō*, pp. 99–100.

readers, including Akutagawa Ryūnosuke 芥川龍之介 (1892-1927);³⁷ and his 1907 publication *Unpyō* 雲表 (A layer of clouds) earned glowing praise in leading literary periodicals such as *Waseda bungaku* 早稲田文学, where he was lauded for his “pure, reverent poetic sensibility,” and for descriptions of nature that “have spirit...they have color, they have voice, and they always have life.”³⁸

Not all responses to *Unpyō* were so positive, however. In a 1907 review of the book for *Bunko*, a critic writing under the pen name “Aichō” 哀鳥 succinctly voiced an issue a number of readers had with Usui’s latest work: “He sprinkles in scientific elements in an attempt to plant the seed of what might be called ‘applied literature.’”³⁹ This term “applied literature”—*ōyō bungaku* 応用文学 in the original—suggests the mechanical “application” of practical scientific knowledge in the literary work, which presumably detracted from the work’s artistic value. Other commentators, including *Taiyō* 太陽 editor Hasegawa Tenkei 長谷川天溪 (1876–1940), criticized what they perceived as an attempt to “harmonize [*chōwa* 調和]” science and literature.⁴⁰

Vexed by these negative responses, which he saw as stemming from a fundamental misunderstanding of his work, Usui published “Kikōbun-ron” in *Bunko* in 1907. In this essay, Usui responds directly to criticisms of “harmonization of science and literature” and “applied literature.” He lays out a definition of the *kikōbun* genre, and clarifies his view on the role of

³⁷ *Sansui mujinzō* 山水無尽蔵 (Landscapes everlasting, 1906), the book in which “Yarigatake tanken-ki” appeared after its serialization, was apparently a favorite of Akutagawa’s, and “Yarigatake” was the inspiration for Akutagawa’s own attempt to climb the mountain. See Kondō Nobuyuki, *Kojima Usui ge: yama no fūryū shisha den* 小島烏水 下山の風流使者伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), p. 85.

³⁸ For more on positive critical responses to *Unpyō*, see Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, pp. 105–7.

³⁹ Aichō, “Geien gūgo” 芸苑偶語, *Bunko* 34 no. 6 (1907), quoted in Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, pp. 107–8.

⁴⁰ Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, 107.

scientific knowledge in literary composition.⁴¹ At the same time, he reviews his personal literary resume, considering how his own *kikōbun* have and have not lived up to the standard he sets.

He begins the essay with a brief account of how he came to write in the *kikōbun* genre, and his shift of interest (noted above) from human history to natural beauty. He goes on to lay out a working definition of *kikōbun*: “*Kikōbun* has a number of forms and is not easy to categorize; here I do not refer to diaries...reports...or guidebooks. I refer only to works that give literary treatment to human life, nature, or both.”⁴² Note the explicit exclusion of guidebooks and diaries from this definition—the kind of practical details included in these genres may be an important part of travel writing, but a work does not meet the *kikōbun* standard unless it uses those details to fashion a complete work of literary art. He further delimits his approach to the genre by specifying that the focus of his *kikōbun* is not “human affairs in and of themselves...I recognize the solemn power of mother nature, and the unique colors of humans, birds and beasts, flowers and trees, stones and soil all swirl together equally in her great garden.”⁴³ Besides, he explains, “there are the much better-suited forms of drama and *shōsetsu*” for the treatment of human affairs, so *kikōbun* should set its sights on a different subject.⁴⁴ Here we see the first hints of a division that becomes central to his *kikōbun* theory: the distinction between *shōsetsu* as a human-centered genre and *kikōbun* as nature-focused. He develops this idea more fully in “*Kikōbun shōron*.”

Usui goes on to pose the question: If nature and the narrator’s subjective experience of it are the proper purview of the *kikōbun* genre, what literary techniques are best suited to the task?

⁴¹ The essay was written as he waited out poor weather at the foot of Mount Kita in the Southern Alps, in lieu of the *kikōbun* he had hoped to produce about the aborted climb. In a companion piece written at the same time, “*Kai sangaku no keitaibi*” 甲斐山岳の形態美 (The formal beauty of the Kai mountains), Usui explores the concomitant aesthetic knowledge of the natural subject, and how this knowledge contributes to *kikōbun* composition.

⁴² “*Kikōbun-ron*,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 373.

⁴³ “*Kikōbun-ron*,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 374.

⁴⁴ “*Kikōbun-ron*,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 375.

He immediately anticipates a potential objection to the literary depiction of landscapes by citing the theory of the German Enlightenment critic G.E. Lessing (1729–1781) that there is a fundamental difference between visual and verbal arts—the former depicts a static state of a space, while the latter treats continuity and change—and that consequently, each has subjects that they are better suited to. Nevertheless, Usui continues, while artistic expression may be limited by its medium, it is not completely restricted; after all, poetry, for example, though technically a verbal art, is by no means exclusively appreciated for its lyric qualities, but has obvious visual components as well.

However, given that visual arts are arguably better suited to depicting natural scenery, should literary treatments of nature rely on techniques of painting or photography in their descriptions of landscape? This was an issue with which Usui struggled throughout his career, most notably in his discussion and use of the *shasei* 写生 (sketching from life) technique of literary sketching.⁴⁵

Usui had argued for the centrality of *shasei* in *kikōbun* in his 1905 essay “Kikōbun ni tsukite” 紀行文に就きて (On *kikōbun*), where he makes the striking claim that contemporary *kikōbun* writers should look to Edo-period comic literature such as Ikku’s *Tokaidōchū hizakurige* for the best examples of how to apply *shasei* sketching in travel writing. Leaving aside for the moment Usui’s idiosyncratic application of the *shasei* concept, suffice to note that in 1905, he was explicitly considering what techniques and terminology from the visual arts could offer to the *kikōbun* writer. In the same essay, he admonishes *kikōbun* writers for giving too little thought to how ideas from painting might be applied to their art, and encourages them to explore new words for the multitude of colors found in the lights and shades of nature.

⁴⁵ *Shasei* was most notably touted by haiku 俳句 and *tanka* 短歌 poetry reformer Masaoka Shiki 正岡子規 (1867–1902), and became an important concept in both literary and visual arts during the Meiji period.

By the time he wrote “Kikōbun-ron,” he was much less convinced of the value of visual arts techniques in *kikōbun* composition. On the contrary, he uses the abundance in recent *kikōbun* of “language one might expect to drip from the brush of a watercolor painter” as an example to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of visual techniques in the verbal art of *kikōbun*.⁴⁶ Writing has enough of its own resources that a theory of literature should not have to rely on techniques of painting; in fact, if the essence of nature is activity and change—and it was, according to his theory of nature—writing must be even *better* than painting for depicting nature.⁴⁷

Usui’s solution to the problem of how to treat the essential activity and change in nature was to apply scientific knowledge of nature to literary depictions of landscape. In “Kikōbun-ron,” he stresses that this was not, as so many of his critics claimed, an attempt to “harmonize science and literature”: “I am disappointed that so many critics are saying, in one way or another, that my writing is too interested in science, or that I am trying to harmonize science and literature...I can’t deny that I have some interest in science, but I never meant to ‘apply’ it, or to ‘plant the seeds of applied literature.’”⁴⁸ Usui suggests that “[science’s] purview is to observe nature’s essence from every angle, while in literature one gathers their personal observation and energy at one beautiful focal point”—scientific writing and literary writing have fundamentally different goals, and any attempt to fuse the two in a single piece of writing is misguided.⁴⁹ He stresses the distinction by mentioning Shiga Shigetaka’s⁵⁰ *Nihon fūkei-ron*⁵¹ and his own *Nihon*

⁴⁶ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 377.

⁴⁷ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 377.

⁴⁸ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 379.

⁴⁹ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 380.

⁵⁰ Shiga was an educator and critic, and was on the editorial board of the periodical *Nihonjin* 日本人 (The Japanese). His theories of *fūkei* 風景 (landscape) and *kokusui* 国粹 (national essence) are frequently read as contributing to ultranationalism. See, for example, Richard Okada, “‘Landscape’ and the Nation-State: A Reading of *Nihon fūkei ron*,” in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, ed. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (New York: Brill, 1997), pp. 90–107.

⁵¹ This highly influential book ran through more than fifteen editions in just eight years, even scoring second to Fukuzawa Yūkichi 福沢諭吉 (1835–1901) in a *Jiji shinpō* 時事新報 survey of readers’ top one hundred favorite

sansui-ron. Shiga's book was frequently praised precisely for its successful fusion of science and literature, and *Nihon sansui-ron* was essentially Usui's answer to Shiga's influential volume. Yet Usui argues that while they are scientific, they are not *kikōbun* at all, and are therefore not subject to criticism of an overly practical approach to that genre. Even setting that fact aside, the two books in question are not exactly a "harmonization" of science and literature: "It's wrapping the bitter pill [science] in an omelet [literature] to help it go down."⁵² In other words, *Nihon fūkei-ron* and *Nihon sansui-ron* were popular scientific books, and their use of literary language helped their non-scientific audience more easily to approach the material.

As for the true *kikōbun* pieces under question, Usui insists that science was only ever intended as background knowledge in his literary works. He actually qualifies his defense by agreeing to a certain extent with his critics: "My intention was to study the particulars, down to each tree and blade of grass, so I could write about change in detail, but I ultimately failed to concretely merge the science into my prose, so that the science was too prominent, the prose too academic."⁵³ To Usui, the ideal role of science was as background knowledge—if a *kikōbun* writer, whose subject according to Usui should be nature, was to truthfully describe a natural scene, then they must have a proper scientific understanding of the natural phenomena which they were observing and describing.

Like many Meiji artists and intellectuals, Usui was indebted to John Ruskin⁵⁴ for much of his theorizing about art, literature, and aesthetics, and even his love for the mountains. Ruskin's

works. Much has been made of its influence on Usui; for example, see Nobuko Fujioka, "Vision or Creation? Kojima Usui and the Literary Landscape of the Japanese Alps," *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no. 4 (2002): pp. 282–92.

⁵² "Kikōbun-ron," in *KUZS*, v. 5, p. 380.

⁵³ "Kikōbun-ron," in *KUZS*, v. 5, p. 387.

⁵⁴ English art critic, artist, and intellectual. He made contributions in a variety of fields, though he is perhaps best known for his theories of art and architecture. For more on his influence in Japan, see Masami Kimura, "Japanese Interest in Ruskin," in *Studies in Ruskin: Essays in Honor of Van Akin Burd*, ed. Robert E. Rhodes and Del Ivan Janik (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1982), pp. 215–44.

influence on Usui can clearly be seen here in the connection he makes between scientific knowledge and truth in art. In *Modern Painters*, Ruskin laid out a thorough-going theory of truth and beauty in visual art as a foundation for positioning William Turner as the foremost contemporary landscape painter. In Volume IV, Part V, entitled “Of Mountain Beauty,” much of the text is dedicated not to a discussion of painting techniques or the appreciation of an art work, but to detailed scientific explanations of mountain structure and the specific formations that the mountain painter will be confronted with. Ruskin argues that if an artist is sufficiently inventive, he has artistic license to alter based on his impressions. His overall message is that whether an artist is completely faithful to a given scene, if their drawings of mountains are accurate according to the scientific principles that govern their conformation and their various features, they are both beautiful and true.

Usui delineates this position clearly in “Kikōbun-ron.” He argues that in order to adequately convey “local color”⁵⁵—to depict scenes that are distinguishable from each other beyond their place names—he felt that research was necessary to understand the local natural phenomena. Unlike a true scientist, whose goal is to describe causes, effects, and understand the inner working of things, Usui explains that “a writer does not need to understand how and why, but needs to be able to see differences [between, for example, extrusive and intrusive igneous mountains],” because these “affect shape, color, and the human reaction to them,” and are necessary for describing a particular locale.⁵⁶ But he is careful to clarify that knowledge of natural science is not all that is needed: “*kikōbun* must strike a delicate balance between nature

⁵⁵ *Chihōshoku* 地方色, also transliterated from English as *rōkaru karā* ローカルカラー, was a keyword in discussions of *kikōbun* at the time.

⁵⁶ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 382.

and human feeling; if it leaves humanity behind and depicts “nature” purely objectively, it becomes a natural history treatise...it loses its value as a work of art.”⁵⁷

In other words, Usui argued for a *kikōbun* that would be an artistic conveyance of true natural beauty to a reader, by a scientifically prepared observer-subject. “Without sufficient knowledge (*chishiki* 知識), it is doubtful whether true perception (*ninshiki* 認識) can take place...your impressions will be influenced by your preconceptions (*gainen* 概念) and imagination (*kūsō* 空想).”⁵⁸ Scientific knowledge, then, was the modern traveler-writer’s armor against the preconceptions engendered by traditional travel poetry that centered on *meisho* and classical poetry. “My so-called scientific style is not an attempt to help the reader intellectually understand things like trees and rock formations; if I broke down and explained natural phenomena, I was simply *explaining* the scene to give some aesthetic interest to my work—is there any kind of literature that does not *explain*?”⁵⁹ By equipping themselves with basic background knowledge and an analytical eye, *kikōbun* writers could venture beyond the established travel destinations, explore Japan’s uncharted nature, and give readers a truly novel experience through their detailed, vital descriptions.

Shifting literary standards: *Shōsetsu* vs. *kikōbun*

In “Kikōbun-ron,” Usui made the case for an approach to *kikōbun* that privileged scientific knowledge and analysis of the natural features of a locale, arguing that this kind of approach raised the literary value of a work, rather than detracting from it. His critics were not convinced, however, and he was once again taken to task for being pedantic, for focusing too much on

⁵⁷ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZZ, v. 5, p. 383.

⁵⁸ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZZ, v. 5, p. 382.

⁵⁹ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZZ, v. 5, p. 388. Emphasis mine.

analysis at the expense of description. These charges were levelled in a roundtable article, “Ima no kikōbun-ka (gappyō)” 今の紀行文家（合評） (Today’s *kikōbun* writers (roundtable)), published in the Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1872–1930)-edited journal *Bunshō sekai* (World of letters) in November 1907.⁶⁰ The assessments of the writers in question are less than flattering, and the criticisms of Usui are especially harsh. Yoshie Kogan 吉江孤雁 (1880-1940) alone admires Usui, praising him for what he sees as a pioneering effort to explore the relationship between humans and nature through the medium of *kikōbun*.

What, then, were the literary standards by which the *Bunshō sekai* critics so harshly scrutinized Usui’s works? For the past decade, writers had sought a simpler, more transparent mode of realist writing. Shimazaki Tōson 島崎藤村 (1872-1943), Kunikida Doppo, and Tayama Katai experimented with literary sketches of nature, and Masaoka Shiki promoted *shaseibun* 写生文, short prose episodes written in the *shasei* sketching style. These developments, along with the influence of French naturalist writers such as Émile Zola (1840-1902), led to the emergence of *shizen shugi* 自然主義, a peculiarly Japanese flavor of naturalism. The rise of naturalism in the first decade of the twentieth century, with its focus on personal confessional and exploring the internal psychological processes that led to the construction of the individual, resulted in the relative stranglehold of the intensely self-oriented realist approach to the *shōsetsu* by around 1910. Tōson’s *Hakai* 破戒 (The broken commandment, 1906), is commonly cited as the first major work of Japanese naturalism, and Katai’s *Futon* 蒲団 (The quilt, 1907) is regarded as one

⁶⁰ In the article, Katagami Tengen 片上天弦 (1884–1928), Mizuno Yōshū 水野葉舟 (1883–1947), Yoshie Kogan, and Maeda Mokujō 前田木城 (1879–1961) discuss five contemporary *kikōbun* writers of note: Tayama Katai, Ōmachi Keigetsu, Chizuka Reisui, Kubo Tenzui 久保天随 (1875–1934), and Kojima Usui.

of the most representative works in the Japanese naturalist style. From 1906, *Waseda bungaku*⁶¹ and *Bunshō sekai*⁶² were both central mouthpieces for the naturalist school.

At the same time, the *shōsetsu* had become the primary medium for artistic literary expression. Frequently translated as “novel,” the *shōsetsu* is a form of prose fiction that has much in common with the western novel, but it also has antecedents in the Japanese and Chinese literary tradition. The term derives from a historical Chinese vernacular genre that was distinguished from official historical writing; early in the Meiji period it became associated with political novels, both translations of western works and Japanese originals, in the term *seiji shōsetsu*. Tsubouchi Shōyō’s 1885 *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓 (The essence of the novel) laid out a viable framework for a modern artistic novel, addressing many of the issues that were central to efforts to modernize Japanese literature, including description, characterization, and interiority.⁶³ By 1907, the *shōsetsu*, with its exploration of the experiences of an interiorized subject, had virtually secured pride of place at the top of the literary hierarchy, and prose writing that did not fit the *shōsetsu* mold was considered second-rate.

⁶¹ Waseda literature. The journal of Waseda University’s literature department. First published by Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 (1859–1935) in 1891, during its second run of publication, which started in 1906, the journal had a *shizen shugi* orientation, and Tōson, Doppo, Katai, and all four of the critics from the *kikōbun* roundtable article were represented in its pages. A complete listing of the contents of the journal throughout its history can be found online at “Waseda bungaku sōmokuji” 早稲田文学総目次, *School of Literature, Waseda University*, 1999, accessed 9 Nov 2017, <http://db2.littera.waseda.jp/wever/bungaku/goLogin.do>.

⁶² As mentioned above, *Bunshō sekai* was edited by Tayama Katai at this time, and it carried works by many of the same naturalist writers mentioned above. For the contents of the journal from its first issue in 1906 until 1921, see *Bunshō sekai sōmokuji—shippitsusha sakuin* 文章世界総目次・執筆索引, ed. Kōno Toshirō 紅野敏郎 (Tokyo: Yagi Shoten, 1986).

⁶³ For more on the history of this term and genre, see Ueda, *Concealment of Politics, Politics of Concealment*. Conventional literary histories uphold *Shōsetsu shinzui* as an originary text in the history of the *shōsetsu*; Ueda argues that while Tsubouchi’s work is valuable as an index of the discourse surrounding the shape and role of the *shōsetsu* in modern Japanese literature, it was not necessarily the solitary origin of what came to be known as the *shōsetsu*.

Sasaki Motonari 佐々木基成 places the *Bunshō sekai* article at the center of what he refers to as the post-Russo-Japanese War *kikōbun* debate.⁶⁴ Briefly tracing the rise and decline in popularity of *kikōbun* during the Meiji and Taisho periods, Sasaki identifies *shasei* as one of the lynchpins of modern definitions of the genre that sought to move away from the classical *bibun* style. On one side of the debate were the *shasei-ha* 写生派, who viewed *shasei* as a stylistic end in itself, while literary genres such as the *shōsetsu* and *kikōbun* were media to which *shasei* could be applied. Sasaki places the discussants in the *Bunshō sekai* article within the *shizen-ha* 自然派 (naturalist school) camp—critics on this side of the debate saw *shasei* as just another generic step, along with *kikōbun* and *shōhinbun* 小品文 (short sketch or essay), on the way towards the literary apex of the *shōsetsu*.⁶⁵

The hierarchical positioning of *kikōbun* and *shōsetsu* is made clear in the *Bunshō sekai* discussion when Tengen asserts that “ultimately, *kikōbun* has a confused focus, and it has a relatively low position within the literary arts. If that focus manages to crystalize, at least some *kikōbun* will naturally reach *shōsetsu* status.”⁶⁶ Tengen is suggesting that *kikōbun* is a less sophisticated form of prose; if only the author could achieve a more appropriate examination of their subject, they might be able to write at the higher level of the *shōsetsu*. It is therefore taken for granted that the *kikōbun* authors under discussion are producing lower-quality work.

Sasaki specifies three points that are common to definitions of *kikōbun* within the *shizen-ha* faction: 1) the disavowal of the classical writing style of traditional *kikōbun* (in favor of a

⁶⁴ Sasaki Motonari, “‘Kikōbun’ no tsukurikata—Nichiro sensōgo no kikōbun ronsō” 紀行文の作り方—日露戦争後の紀行文論争一, *Nihon kindai bungaku* 64 (2001), pp. 29–41.

⁶⁵ Sasaki, “‘Kikōbun’ no tsukurikata,” p. 32.

⁶⁶ Katagami Tengen, Mizuno Yōshū, Yoshie Kogan, and Maeda Mokujiō, “Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō),” *Bunshō sekai* 2, no. 13 (1907): p. 105.

more modern *genbun itchi* 言文一致⁶⁷ style), and the importance of 2) “local color” and 3) detailed descriptions of nature.⁶⁸ These three points are borne out in the definition put forward in the roundtable article. Kogan and Yōshū both stress that today’s *kikōbun* should move away from the tendencies of past *kikōbun* to focus too much on the bare facts of what was seen and heard, whether as a result of a romantic fascination with the exotic customs of the place visited or due to an over-emphasis on including guidebook-like information. Mokujiō highlights the importance of the reader’s experience, saying that the *kikōbun* writer should include details of local society and landscape with a clarity that allows the reader to feel as if they are seeing the place itself; Tengen sums this idea up with the term “local color,” arguing that the ideal *kikōbun* combines local color with “personal interest,” or the author’s own reactions to what they see and hear, in perfect harmony.⁶⁹

This, then, was the critical standard with which the roundtable critics were working: *kikōbun* should be written in modern language, and combine *shasei*-style sketches of nature and detailed information about the traveled-to location (local color) with the added personal touch of the author-narrator’s reactions to the scenes and events, all to invoke in the reader a realistic experience of the same journey. Furthermore, this version of *kikōbun* was envisioned within the larger framework of literary naturalism, wherein *kikōbun* was a lesser literary genre that at best represented a literary stepping stone on the progression towards the more sophisticated *shōsetsu*.

In this context, some of the critiques of Usui’s work seem paradoxical. At first, the discussants appear to consider Usui’s work within their modern *kikōbun* framework. Focusing on

⁶⁷ *Genbun itchi*, literally “unification of spoken and written,” refers to the Meiji period development of a standard vernacular written style to replace the classical literary language. For a thorough discussion of the history of the movement, see Nanette Twine, “The Genbunitchi Movement: Its Origin, Development, and Conclusion,” *Monumenta Nipponica* 33, no. 3 (1978), pp. 333–56.

⁶⁸ Sasaki, “‘Kikōbun’ no tsukurikata,” p. 31.

⁶⁹ Katagami et al., “Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō),” p. 100.

Unpyō, his latest publication, they find his sketching skills lacking: “his failure to ‘depict’ [*egaite nai* 描いてない] is a weakness.”⁷⁰ They also condemn his preoccupation with language, saying that the “copious wordplay” makes his prose “look pedantic,” and that “he is at the mercy of the letters [*bunshō*]. It feels like he’s taking great pains just to say this or that clever thing.”⁷¹

In the following passage from “Tsubakurodake oyobi Otenshōdake ni noboru ki” 燕岳及大天井岳に登る記 (A record of climbing Mount Tsubakuro and Mount Otenshō, 1907), Usui describes the view of Mount Yari from the peak of Tsubakuro:

The clouds soar behind the great spear [the literal meaning of “Yari”], appearing like thin smoke. There was no fire so it certainly was not smoke, but they hardly looked like clouds. They were cut to shreds by the spear’s tip and fell into the valley in the blink of an eye. The majesty of nature appears in a momentary flash. Moving my eyes downward to the sheer rock wall in the background, I saw snow for the first time since leaving Nakafusa. It created a white mottled pattern on the wall, like the downy feathers of a dove.

Ah, how unlucky the person who never in their life sees this sight. Hey, don’t you think so? What a thrill, what a thrill! I forgot myself, waving my hat in the air and leaping and dancing atop the rocks.⁷²

This passage is typical of the prose in *Unpyō*. While some figurative language (such as the reference to the “spear tip” of Mount Yari) remains, the prose is more straightforward and descriptive, and linguistically the style is much closer to modern spoken Japanese. Usui has also limited overt descriptions of the specific natural features of the scene, focusing more on shapes,

⁷⁰ Katagami et al., “*Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō)*,” p. 103.

⁷¹ Katagami et al., “*Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō)*,” p. 103.

⁷² *Ōyari no ushiro ni kumo ga tondeiru, sore ga ussuri to kemuri no yō da, hi ga nai karakemuri to wa ienai ga, kumo to wa omowarenai, sore ga Yari no tossaki ni sundan serarete matataku ma ni tani e ochite shimatta, shizen no sōgon wa, mōmentaru no hirameki ni mieru, me o shita ni utsushite Yarigatake haigo no zeppeki ni oyobosu to, Nakafusa kara koko made minakatta yuki ga hato no nikoge no yō ni shiroi hu ni natteiru. Aa, umarete koko o minai no wa fukō na hito da, naa, omae wa sō omowanu ka, tsūkai, tsūkai to ware o wasurete, iwa no ue de bō o futte hitori de odottari, hanetari shita.* 大槍の後に雲が飛んでゐる、それがうっすらと煙のやうだ、火が無いから煙とは言へないが、雲とは思はれない、それが槍の突先に寸断せられて瞬く間に谷へ落ちてしまった、自然の荘厳は、瞬間的（モーメンタル）の閃めきに見える、眼を下にうつして槍ヶ岳背後に及ぼすと、中房からこゝまで見なかった雪が鳩の和毛のやうに白い斑になってゐる。あゝ、生まれてこゝを見ないのは不幸な人だ、なあ、お前はさうおもはぬか、痛快、痛快と我を忘れて、岩の上で帽を振って一人で踊ったり、跳ねたりした。 “Tsubakurodake oyobi Otenshōdake ni noboru ki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 96.

colors, and movement. In fact, the attempt to achieve a more modern linguistic style while avoiding bogging down the descriptions with displays of background knowledge of geology and botany in *Unpyō* feels like an overcorrection at times, resulting in some rather prosaic descriptions. Usui finds a better balance in his natural descriptive prose in later publications.

Setting aside the question of the validity of their criticisms, within the *kikōbun* framework proposed in the roundtable, the critiques noted above seem like straightforward comparisons of Usui's work to the model. Yet they single out Usui's first publication, *Sentō shōkei*, for praise, in contrast to *Unpyō*. This distinction is striking, given that, as shown above, the earlier work was written entirely in classical language and featured abundant linguistic clichés and *gesaku*-style wordplay, while the latter was written predominately in a modern, colloquial style (excepting two pieces that retain a more classical language). While Kondō likewise observes that *Unpyō* shows traces of Usui's tendency toward *bibun*-like verbosity,⁷³ by this time they were merely vestiges of what was still very much at the forefront in works like *Sentō shōkei*. This paradox suggests that perhaps the critics resorted to comparing his work to the older *bibun* model⁷⁴ when they found him wanting according to their own, though this seems unlikely given their clear statement of the standard earlier in the discussion and no indication of a shift of perspective.

In any case, the point of critique given most attention in the discussion centers on Usui's reliance on logic (*rikutsu* 理屈) and reasoning (*ronzuru* 論) in his *kikōbun*.⁷⁵ Given the lack of examples from Usui's texts and the relatively free use of the terms “logic” and “reasoning”—

⁷³ Kondō Nobuyuki, “Kaidai; kaisetsu” 解題・解説, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 524.

⁷⁴ Which was still being practiced as a valid, albeit less valued by the literary elite, *kikōbun* approach, by writers such as Kubo Tenzui and Chizuka Reisui. See Sasaki, “‘Kikōbun’ no tsukurikata,” 36.

⁷⁵ “Mokujō: If you are going to depict the relationship between humans and nature, you should just show it. I don't think there's any need for reasoning.

Yōshū: Some reasoning is okay, but it's bad in this case because it's all he does.

Mokujō: No. The essential stance of the *kikōbun* writer should be to avoid putting any reasoning into their writing. To say ‘people today look at nature this way and that's good or that's bad’—that kind of logic just doesn't have any place in *kikōbun*.” Katagami et al., “Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō),” p. 104.

they are left undefined and are thus empty signifiers beyond their basic lexical meaning—it is difficult to pin down exactly what aspect of Usui’s work is being singled out here. Judging from Usui’s response to the roundtable article, and the subsequent direction his writing took, which will be discussed below, we can identify two likely culprits: the extensive use of scientific knowledge in descriptions, and the essayistic quality of certain sections of his *kikōbun*, wherein he discusses the more factual details of a locale’s natural history, for example. To naturalism-minded readers like the *Bunshō sekai* critics, these elements combined to create a *kikōbun* that went beyond merely telling the reader what was seen and what the author’s reaction was, to trying to delve into the landscapes observed and explain their origins and processes. As Usui had already explained in “Kikōbun-ron” and would further clarify in “Kikōbun shōron” and elsewhere, this was never his intention, but his failure to bear his theory out in praxis garnered criticism from theorists with differing ideas of *kikōbun*’s proper form.

Ultimately, the discussants dismiss Usui outright. While Katai and Keigetsu are spared somewhat, presumably because of their coterie associations, the discussants seem to write off Usui in part because of his lack of credentials:

Mokujō: He has no relation to us.
Yōshū: He’s from Yokohama.⁷⁶

This is the final word in the section where they discuss Usui. The four critics, all members of the influential *Waseda-ha* 早稲田派 literary coterie, not only find his work wanting according to their literary standards, but they finally write off Usui, who was educated and based in Yokohama and associated with *Bunko*, a less prestigious journal for youths, as a literary outsider. This not only highlights the coterie- and geography-based hierarchical elitism that had taken hold

⁷⁶ Katagami et al., “Ima no kikōbunka (gappyō),” p. 104.

in the Meiji *bundan* literary circles and would continue to develop in the coming decades;⁷⁷ it also parallels the marginalization of *kikōbun* and other “genre literature” vis-à-vis the dominant *shōsetsu*, to which Usui and Japanese mountain writing fell victim.

***Kikōbun*’s proper place: Writing nature, writing mountains**

Usui was unique among the *kikōbun* writers who were critiqued in the *Bunshō sekai* roundtable article in publicly responding to the criticisms levelled at him, in the form of “Kikōbun shōron,” published in *Bunshō sekai* one month after the roundtable article, in December 1907. As both Sasaki⁷⁸ and Kondō⁷⁹ suggest, this likely stemmed from Usui’s dedication to his idiosyncratic image of a reformed *kikōbun*—specifically, one that included mountains as appropriate subject matter. Practically speaking, having co-founded the Japanese Alpine Club in 1905 and commenced editing of that club’s journal in 1906, Usui was invested in increasing interest in mountains more broadly. Even beyond these practical concerns, Usui was genuinely passionate about spreading the good word of mountain culture, and this ardor is evident in his own writings and was frequently described in the writings of his contemporaries.⁸⁰ The publication of “Kikōbun shōron,” along with “Kikōbun-ron” three months previously, was an important step in Usui’s larger project of carving out a place in the *kikōbun* genre for writing about mountains, and eventually moving on to forge his own mountain writing genre, *sangaku bungaku*.

⁷⁷ For an exploration of the Tokyo-centered publishing industry in the first half of the 20th century, see Edward Mack, *Manufacturing Modern Japanese Literature: Publishing, Prizes, and the Ascription of Literary Value* (Duke University Press, 2010). For a case study of the regional hierarchy underpinning the Japanese literary world, see Hoyt Long, *On Uneven Ground: Miyazawa Kenji and the Making of Place in Modern Japan* (Stanford University Press, 2012).

⁷⁸ Sasaki, “‘Kikōbun’ no tsukurikata,” p. 33.

⁷⁹ Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, p. 115.

⁸⁰ For example, in his notes for the Fall 1900 meeting of the *Bunko* supporters’ club, Kawai Suimei 河井醉茗 (1874-1965) describes Usui’s ebullient presentation of his recent trip to the mountains of the interior. See Kondō, *Kojima Usui jō*, p. 133.

In response to the roundtable critics' hierarchical framework, which held *shōsetsu* up as the literary ideal and viewed *kikōbun* as a semi-*shōsetsu*, a technical step along the way but not necessarily a worthy genre in its own right, in “Kikōbun shōron” Usui introduces a radically new way of positioning *kikōbun* within the generic hierarchy. He proposes that *kikōbun* should take nature as its subject, and that the human element should only be addressed to the extent that it is a component of nature as a whole. He sets this version of *kikōbun* in contrast to the *shōsetsu*, or prose fiction, which he argues takes humanity as its subject and uses nature only as a backdrop. This distinction was strategic: Usui was attempting to elevate *kikōbun*, and the nature that should be its purview, to the level of the *shōsetsu* and its human affairs.

Usui begins the essay by distinguishing modern *kikōbun* from traditional approaches to the genre. Citing early Edo-period examples such as Kaibara Ekiken's 貝原益軒 (1630–1714) *Kisoji-ki* 木曾路記⁸¹ and Tachibana Nankei's 橋南谿 (1753–1805) *Tōzai yūki* 東西遊記⁸², he describes classical *kikōbun* as flavorless, merely “rough compilations of things seen and heard on the road,” and he complains that in contrast to the *shōsetsu* and poetry, which have begun to modernize and break out of their traditional strictures, the *kikōbun* genre seems unable to “match pace.”⁸³ He argues for a more nuanced consideration of nature in literature: “Earlier poets traveled for the sake of poetic composition, searching for *utamakura*...using nature for poetic topics and as a tool for flowery language...Isn't it too casual and meaningless for us to approach

⁸¹ Ekiken is perhaps best known for texts such as *Onna daigaku* 女大学 (Greater learning for women, early 18th century) and *Yamato honzō* 大和本草 (Medicinal herbs of Japan, 1709). *Kisoji-ki* (The Kiso road, 1709) was an account of Ekiken's travel from Edo to Kyoto via the Nakasendō highway, which ran inland through the mountainous areas of modern-day Gunma, Nagano, and Gifu prefectures.

⁸² Tachibana Nankei was a physician, and travelled widely throughout the Japanese provinces to gather information about illnesses and treatments. His travels yielded two *kikōbun*, *Saiyūki* 西遊記 (Journey to the west) and *Tōyūki* 東遊記 (Journey to the east), which were both published in 1795 and then later as a single publication. In one section of his *kikōbun*, entitled “Meizan-ron” 名山論 (On famous mountains), Nankei lists some of Japan's tallest mountains and describes some of his personal favorites, an interesting precursor (among others) to Fukata Kyūya's 深田久弥 (1903–1971) celebrated *Nihon hyakumeizan* 日本百名山 (100 famous Japanese mountains, 1964).

⁸³ “Kikōbun-shōron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 390–91.

nature in the same way [in this day and age]?”⁸⁴ Hence the logic and reasoning for which Usui’s work was so harshly criticized:

When confronting nature, we cannot be satisfied with simple sketching as in the past... We might not try to understand nature by experimenting and analyzing like the scientist, but to ignore it entirely and just sketch on the one hand and talk about our feelings on the other will eventually lead to mere speculation and philosophizing. It’s said that my *Unpyō* has too much logic, but this is because I can’t just keep rehashing the same old songs of praise. As long as I have my part in these literary arts, I won’t ignore the flood of minutiae that pour over me.⁸⁵

Usui argues that the *shōsetsu* seems more interested in the daily life of the human subject, even when the human subject comes into contact with and is influenced by the natural environment. Yet the intricacies of the human-nature interaction are such an important part of human life that a stronger focus is needed on that process of subject-object interaction itself, and the *kikōbun* should be the genre that fills this role. By shifting the focus from the individual human subject within their environment, to the relationship between the environment and the observing subject, the *kikōbun* would take on a generic role every bit as important as the *shōsetsu*, in Usui’s estimation.

Alas, this was not to be the case. Usui’s distinction between the *shōsetsu*—“human and nature moving together”—and the *kikōbun*—“the human enveloped in nature, and moving within it”—was not convincing to his naturalism-inclined contemporaries, who understood their human subjects as integrally influenced by their environment. Kumagai identifies this element as the fatal flaw in Usui’s *kikōbun* apologia: “[At a time when] ‘nature’ and ‘life’ were such important topics in the *shōsetsu* world, for Usui to use the same keywords to advocate for writing about the synthesis of ‘nature’ and ‘humanity’ was to put his very status as a *kikōbun* writer in jeopardy.”⁸⁶

In a rebuttal to “*Kikōbun shōron*” published in the same issue as Usui’s article, Mokujiō

⁸⁴ “*Kikōbun-shōron*,” in *KUZS*, v. 5, p. 392.

⁸⁵ “*Kikōbun-shōron*,” in *KUZS*, v. 5, pp. 393–94.

⁸⁶ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, 145.

illustrates this shortcoming, arguing that Usui had done no more than describe one kind of *shōsetsu*. Mokujiō fastens to one claim of Usui's in particular that seems to make his definition of the genre untenable: in "Kikōbun shōron," Usui writes that *kikōbun* "does not necessarily require a 'journey' worthy of that name."⁸⁷ This claim alone marked Usui's definition as "*kikōbun* heterodoxy" as far as Mokujiō was concerned.⁸⁸

As shown above, Usui was arguing in "Kikōbun shōron" for an entirely different approach to the relationship between humans and nature than that applied to the *shōsetsu*. The issue was not the presence of the keywords "nature" and "humanity," which Usui saw in both genres, but the relative amount of focus on these two elements and the relationship between them. Mokujiō argued that wherever humans were present in the *shōsetsu*, nature was being considered as a matter of course; Usui's response was that "human interest" could exist even in literary depictions of the wildest parts of nature: "Whether I stand atop a 3,000 meter snow-covered primordial peak, or float across the firmament in a dirigible balloon...nature resides in me and I flow through it; nature becomes 'another self,' so that human interest can be said to exist everywhere in heaven and earth."⁸⁹ Likewise, it is clear that Usui did not literally mean that *kikōbun* required no travel when he wrote that the genre "does not necessarily require a 'journey' worthy of that name [*Ryokō to iu hodo no ryokō o hitsuyō to mo shinai* 旅行といふほどの旅行を必要ともしない]." The larger passage reads: "There is no need to adhere strictly to the old name [of *kikōbun*] and write a chronicle of everything that happened to one on the road...of course armchair fabrication is out of the question, but [*kikōbun*] does not necessarily require a

⁸⁷ "Kikōbun-shōron," in KUZS, v. 5, p. 393.

⁸⁸ Sasaki, "'Kikōbun' no tsukurikata," 34.

⁸⁹ "Kikōbun-shōron," in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 395–96.

‘journey’ worthy of that name.’⁹⁰ Given this context, it seems reductive to take Usui’s claim literally. If anything, Usui was arguing for even *larger* excursions to be addressed in *kikōbun*, such as the mountain explorations he himself was undertaking.

Notwithstanding the terminological indeterminacy that resulted from this generic crossfire, Usui’s critics strategically took him at his word, and were able easily to dismiss his notions of *kikōbun* on these kinds of inconsistencies. Usui’s arguments were ultimately not strong or clear enough to significantly impact what would go down in history as the *kikōbun* genre. At best, the genre he described as *kikōbun* inspired some critics to propose that some other term might be more appropriate. Yoshie Kogan, who repeatedly noted Usui’s characteristic approach to exploring the relationship between humans and nature (even in the roundtable article discussed above, where Kogan was the lone voice in defense of Usui), wondered if there wasn’t some better term for Usui’s writing than *kikōbun* or *jokeibun* 叙景文 (descriptive writing).⁹¹ Mokujō, in his response to “Kikōbun shōron,” suggested that *shizen bungaku* might be more suitable for the kind of writing Usui was describing, and many other contemporary reviewers used the term to describe Usui and his work.⁹² Kumagai proposes the same terminology over a century later in his dissertation:

The attempt to create a kind of *kikōbun* that focused on verifiable real-world places and natural phenomena, narrated by a first-person “I,” and separate from the novel resulted in pieces... which are neither novels nor quite *kikōbun*. Despite the focus on “human interest,” the simultaneous focus on natural description guaranteed its independence from the novel; the result was arguably a new genre which might be called “*shizen bungaku*.”⁹³

For his part, Usui himself used the term *shizen bungaku* not infrequently, but his use of the term seems to refer more to an approach to writing, rather than to a standalone genre. For

⁹⁰ “Kikōbun-shōron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 393.

⁹¹ See Kondō, *Kojima Usui jō*, p. 106.

⁹² For examples of positive uses of the term in reviews of the first volume of *Nihon Arupusu*, see Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, pp. 215–16.

⁹³ Kumagai, *Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun*, 154.

example, in “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan” 日本アルプスの南半 (The southern Japanese Alps, 1907), Usui wonders at the dearth of writing that considers the relationship between nature and humans, observing that “in today’s literature there is only humanity and no nature; in science, there is only nature and no humanity—to the extent that there is humanity in science...it is only as a natural phenomenon.”⁹⁴ Because humanity and nature are in a kind of fundamental opposition, he argues, most prose literature has chosen to focus on the human side of the equation, and only haiku, waka, and painting have focused on nature at all; the purpose of nature writing would be “not only to imitate nature’s façade or outlines, but to mediate the inspired connection between human and nature.”⁹⁵ Here, as in the shorter “Shizen bungaku o okosu no gi” 自然文学を起すの議 (On starting a literature of nature, 1906), Usui is advocating not for a new genre dedicated to writing about nature—he very clearly saw *kikōbun* in that role—but for a paradigm shift in the way nature is treated in literature generally. Again, Usui’s sometimes less-than-rigorous rhetorical style left room for critics to mistake his meaning—or perhaps the literary sea-change he was proposing was just too far-fetched to gain a foothold. Whatever the case, *shizen bungaku* became another generic shelf on which to place Usui and his unorthodox writing.

In “Kikōbun shōron,” Usui also makes a gesture to the importance of leisure in modern life. In part, this move adds weight to the argument for a more prominent role for *kikōbun*, which was presumably a lower-tier genre in premodern literature because of its frivolous focus on travel—“It goes without saying that life necessarily includes both motion and stillness...now as in the past, people have struggled and faced reality; but even if people have not ignored leisure, it is doubtful how much effort has been dedicated to true stillness.”⁹⁶ This appeal to leisure also

⁹⁴ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 55–56.

⁹⁵ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 55.

⁹⁶ “Kikōbun-shōron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 391–92.

opens up an avenue for modern leisure activities, in this case mountain climbing, to become a topic for serious, or literary, discussion. The *Bunshō sekai* critics had alleged that the tendency of *kikōbun* from premodern times to the present to introduce untraveled wilderness was merely for the sake of novelty; Usui counters this notion, suggesting that mountain climbing, and by extension writing about mountain climbing, would not be possible without a vested personal interest in the endeavor.⁹⁷ This very personal interest in experiencing uncharted natural areas and writing about those experiences is precisely what gives Usui's *kikōbun* the "human interest" so vaunted by the *shōsetsu* clique, according to his position.

Though they were not ultimately successful in their goal of promoting *kikōbun* to a higher position in the literary hierarchy, the publication of "Kikōbun-ron" and "Kikōbun shōron" was still an important step for Usui, because these essays laid the groundwork for constructing a genre of mountain writing, *sangaku bungaku*, that had *kikōbun* as one of its foundational elements. Kondō observes that around this time,

Usui began to clearly distinguish between travel and editorial in his writing...he sought the 'vitality of nature revealed to humans through activity, transition, change, color, etc.,' mentioned in 'Kikōbun-ron,' in the form of *kikōbun*; he began to write about scientific topics such as mountain geography and history primarily in the form of essays.⁹⁸

This is an important shift to note, and it is in fact central to the question of *sangaku bungaku*'s genesis. Kondō seems to attribute this new trend primarily to Usui's internalization of the accusations against Usui of "applied literature," of trying to create some kind of harmony between science and literature. While Usui's experience with the critics was certainly important, and was the direct prompt for the composition of the essays discussed above, it cannot entirely explain Usui's new approach. I contend that Usui's new genre owed as much to strategic

⁹⁷ "Kikōbun-shōron, in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 394–95. Anyone who has climbed in the Northern Alps can attest to the veracity of Usui's position, especially considering the conditions when he climbed the mountain over one hundred years ago.

⁹⁸ Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, pp. 129–30.

adaptations of western mountaineering literature—his earliest uses of the term are in reference to European examples—as to debates over genre within the Japanese literary scene.

Sangaku bungaku: A Japanese literature of the mountains

Despite his protestations against claims that he sought to harmonize science and literature, Usui was dedicated as ever to both pursuits as he continued to refine his writing following the *Bunshō sekai* debate. On one hand, Usui was ever the literary romantic, and his literary efforts were always towards creating a *kikōbun* that could be considered alongside the *shōsetsu* as artistic literature; he felt that the criticisms he received of “practicality” had barred him from that domain, so he endeavored to polish the obvious scientific rambling from his literary *kikōbun* pieces. On the other hand, Usui’s first passion was for the mountains: not only spending his leisure time there and producing artistic descriptions of his experiences and the natural world he encountered there, but learning more about them and encouraging others to do the same. To be sure, Usui had no illusions of being a scientist, a point he was careful to make at the beginning of many of his more science-oriented essays. Scientific knowledge of natural phenomena provided the underpinnings of natural landscapes, laid out as a foundation for the aesthetic appreciation of those landscapes. Usui gave scientific explanations of the mountains he climbed to the extent that it helped him to better describe them, and helped the reader to better grasp the impressions he was trying to convey.

Rather than eradicating science from his writing entirely, then, he relegated it to other, more essayistic pieces of writing. The result was a bifurcated mountain literature, perhaps best displayed in the first volume of his *Nihon Arupusu*, which ran to four volumes, published between 1910 and 1915. *Nihon Arupusu* was front-loaded with miscellaneous essays (*ronbun* 論

文), followed by travel accounts (*sōsaku* 創作) from climbs in the Japanese Alps unburdened by pedantic scientific explanation and reflection. This and subsequent volumes of *Nihon Arupusu* received glowing praise, and helped establish Usui among critics as an accomplished writer of both *shizen bungaku* and *sangaku bungaku*.

To fully understand this new approach, it is necessary to consider some of the writers whom Usui considered important examples of European mountain literature.⁹⁹ Usui wrote frequently of the relative popularity and development mountaineering and mountain writing enjoyed in the west, deploring the Japanese state of the sport and calling for improvements in line with the progress in Europe. In “Tozan-ron,” 登山論 (On mountaineering, 1902) for example, he decries the Japanese perspective on mountains: “I can’t help but regret the Japanese attitude that has been so cold and indifferent to the mountains, even seeing them at times as a useless burden. The Europeans have all raised their eyes to their Alps...alpine flora and the like have been studied to exhaustion, so that the hope of making new discoveries is almost gone,” and he goes on to note that John Tyndall (1820–1893) and James Baillie Fraser (1783–1856) have written important works about their experiences climbing in the Alps and the Himalayas, respectively.¹⁰⁰ In “Sangaku kikōbun no shumi” 山岳紀行文の趣味 (The pastime of mountain travel writing, 1911), Usui once again makes a case for mountain-centered *kikōbun*, and lists Tyndall, James Forbes (1809–1868), John Ruskin, and Leslie Stephen (1832–1904) as examples of accomplished mountain writers.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ My discussion here considers only those mountain writers who wrote in the English language. There were of course other European mountaineers climbing in the Alps and publishing about their experiences, but much of this literature is not available in English or Japanese translation. Usui would thus have had limited access, and he rarely references mountain writing from abroad written in languages other than English. I have focused primarily on writers whom Usui has mentioned as being important or influential to him or to mountain writing more generally.

¹⁰⁰ “Tozan-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 61–62.

¹⁰¹ “Sangaku kikōbun no shumi,” in KUZS, v. 7, pp. 166–69.

Kumagai, Fujioka, and others have explored in detail the profound influence John Ruskin had on Usui's interest in mountains and mountain literature. While Usui's interest in Ruskin is undeniable, it is important to acknowledge that Usui saw *sangaku bungaku* as part of a larger network of world mountaineering literature, and Ruskin was, after all, only one outstanding mountain writer among many. I would like to consider here two of the other writers mentioned: Tyndall and Forbes. It should be noted here that—at the risk of over-generalizing, and there are notable exceptions—much of the early Alpine climbing and writing was done by scientists. Robert H. Bates notes several times in his history of English-language mountaineering literature before 1946 that many (though not all) English climbers in the early days of European alpinism “felt they needed a reason for their mountain wanderings, and selected science.”¹⁰² Forbes, one of the earliest English pioneers of the Alps, was under the same impression, writing in 1857, at the height of the golden age of alpinism, that “[a]t first, as was natural, the desire to explore the scientific wonders of the High Alps...induced men to incur [more difficult feats of climbing].” In contrast, his editor W.A.B. Coolidge, writing with fifty years of hindsight, notes that “the higher Alpine summits and passes were explored for the first time by far more ‘tourists,’ as distinguished from ‘scientific men,’ than Forbes imagined.”¹⁰³

Forbes, who was from Scotland, and Tyndall, a physicist from Ireland, were influential scientists as well as pioneers of Alpine climbing: both made significant advances in the fields of glaciology and physics. Their respective writing styles are distinguished by the degree to which their scientific interest in the mountains is reflected in their mountain narratives. Tyndall, on one

¹⁰² Robert H. Bates, *Mystery, Beauty, and Danger: The Literature of the Mountains and Mountain Climbing Published in English before 1946* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2000), p. 49.

¹⁰³ James David Forbes, *Travels through the Alps of Savoy and Other Parts of the Pennine Chain: With Observations on the Phenomena of Glaciers*, ed. William Augustus Brevoort Coolidge (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1900), pp. 482–83.

hand, sprinkles scientific reflections and explanations into his otherwise much more climbing-focused prose; his narrative flows smoothly from detailed, high-tension descriptions of technical rock- and ice-climbing obstacles to observations using a prism and his conclusions regarding the effect of the altitude on light polarization.

Forbes, though he expressly states his intention to dedicate his “book of travels” to the narration of his climbing experiences, tends much more heavily towards scientific explication in his writing. Of the twenty-one chapters in his most extensive collection of travel writings, *Travels Through the Alps of Savoy and Other Parts of the Pennine Chain*, ten are devoted to discussion of the science of glaciers and the description of experiments performed during excursions in the mountains, with titles such as “On the Geological Agency of Glaciers,” “Account of Experiments on the Motion of the Ice of the Mer de Glace of Chamouni,” and “An Attempt to Explain the Leading Phenomena of Glaciers.” Speaking just of the narrative sections, Tyndall has a more literary effect overall: his descriptions of both action and scenery are more striking, his Romantic reflections on the relationship between humans and nature are more frequent and thought-provoking; Forbes’s scientific, analytical eye lends a level of detail to his descriptions of routes, scenes, and localities, but one comes away from his writing feeling less like one has heard an engaging story.

Usui’s *sangaku bungaku*, exemplified by the four-volume *Nihon Arupusu*, bears some resemblance to the European writers whom he singles out as exemplars of his chosen genre. In structure, Usui’s work looks much like Forbes’s *Travels Through the Alps*, given the even inclusion of narrative and non-narrative pieces. However, even in Forbes’s most narrative chapters, he was ever the scientific observer, and relatively dry descriptions of routes taken and geological phenomena observed rarely give way to more heightened aesthetic or philosophic

reflection on nature and humanity. Usui's earlier *kikōbun*, which tended more towards blending sections of scientific explanation into the narrative, had much in common with Tyndall's writing style, but by *Nihon Arupusu* he had moved away from that style of writing in his narrative works. Much of the essay-type pieces in *Nihon Arupusu* are rather more in the vein of John Ruskin's work, giving scientific explanations of the Japanese Alps and their various geological and meteorological phenomena as a foundation for explicating theories of art and aesthetics.

One more writer should be introduced, without whom a discussion of Japanese mountain writing would not be complete: Walter Weston (1860–1940). With a commemorative plaque in the mountain resort town of Kamikōchi and an annual festival held by the Japanese Alpine Club dedicated to him, Walter Weston is a significant figure in the development of modern mountaineering in Japan. He played a role in the spread of the term “Japanese Alps,” provided encouragement and support to Usui and his cohort in the founding of the JAC, and is generally considered to be one of the most important figures in the popularization of the sport of Japanese mountaineering. He and Usui met in 1903, and their friendship had a profound influence on Usui's mountain-related activities.¹⁰⁴

In terms of Usui's writing, the two have the most in common in the works of the early 1910s, such as *Yarigatake tanken-ki*. Weston was also not a scientist, but an Anglican missionary, and in his travel writing collection *Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps* he frequently makes observations of local culture and customs, and indulges in reflections on the Japanese character. In the early 1910s Usui had also regularly noted in his *kikōbun* interesting place-name origins, local folk traditions, and other elements of local human color. But

¹⁰⁴ Weston and his contributions to the history of Japanese mountaineering have been written about extensively in Japanese: “there is virtually a Walter Weston publishing industry in Japan with his works reprinted both in English and Japanese and numerous articles written about him,” as Hamilton puts it. Hamilton, “Development of Mountaineering in Meiji Japan,” p. 95.

these kinds of observations and reflections had also been mostly moved to essays in *Nihon Arupusu*, and the travel narratives were generally focused on the trip itself and the natural scenery encountered.

What makes Usui's work stand out, what sets *sangaku bungaku* apart as Usui's own contribution to both Japanese literature and world mountain literature, is the synthetic quality of his major publications like *Nihon Arupusu*. While many of the individual pieces, though not all of them, had been published individually in a periodical before compilation into one of his books, Usui's strategy of dividing his mountain writing into smaller texts in separate categories, then combining them into one larger text like *Nihon Arupusu*, promised a multidisciplinary literary panorama of Japan's high places, all available within the pages of one book. This suggests an interesting parallel with Usui's frequent insistence upon the all-encompassing quality of the mountains themselves. He frequently quoted Ruskin from *Modern Painters Volume IV* that "mountains are the beginning and the end of all natural scenery"¹⁰⁵ he believed not only that mountains were a storehouse of practically all natural phenomena, but that they represented harmony between nature and humanity, and a tangible synthesis of science and history.¹⁰⁶ To Usui, the mountains themselves were literally an art form, and his *sangaku bungaku* was his humble attempt—and he was always humble about his extensive contributions—to understand the mountains and become a part of their history.

¹⁰⁵ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters Volume IV*, vol. 6 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–2010), p. 418.

¹⁰⁶ See Figure 2, and the discussion in "Nihon sangakubi-ron" 日本山岳美論, in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 15–35.

during the Meiji period. Certainly Usui repeatedly referenced Ruskin and elements of his theories and writing bear much resemblance to the English critic; but Usui's appreciation of Ruskin must be understood within the broader Japanese literary context in which he encountered him, tempered by the ways Ruskin and other English romantic thinkers had been read and presented by writers such as Kitamura Tōkoku 北村透谷 (1868–1894), Tokutomi Rōka 徳富蘆花 (1868–1927), and Shimazaki Tōson. Similarly, Usui himself writes about how important Shiga's *Nihon fūkei-ron* was in the history of the JAC's formation and the development of mountain climbing and writing in Japan; yet it must be remembered that Shiga never set foot on a mountain worthy of the name, and his role in the history of Japanese mountaineering is as much a matter of myth as reality.

Kojima Usui's *sangaku bungaku* is an illustrative, albeit little-known, example of the eclectic, confluent, and innovative developments that were taking place in the Meiji period in Japanese literature, and in Japanese society more broadly. Scholars and intellectuals vacillated between the veritable flood of new ideas that poured in in the wake of the Meiji Restoration in the form of new technologies, systems of government and education, modern poetry and novels, and so much more, on the one hand; and the centripetal pull of traditional¹⁰⁷ Japanese cultural forms on the other, often in reaction to what was seen as unbridled westernization at the expense of Japanese identity. Edo-period *gesaku* fiction, early-Meiji political novels, and the western novel were coalescing into the modern *shōsetsu*; and poetic expression was finding new forms in haiku and *tanka* adapted to modern sensibilities. Meanwhile, from his home in Yokohama, from the Chūō-sen train line expanding ever farther into the country's interior, and from the peaks and valleys of the newly-dubbed Japanese Alps, Kojima Usui crafted his own contribution to modern

¹⁰⁷ Or “traditional,” if one prefers, in the sense that many Japanese traditions were invented at this very time as part of the project of forming a modern Japanese nation.

Japanese literature: a literature of the mountains and the mountaineer, *sangaku bungaku*, which combined keen scientific observation of alpine landscapes with a deep personal investment in the observer's connection to their environment, all to create a narrative of mountain travel that explored the relationship between humans and nature through integrally visual descriptions of observed landscapes.

Chapter Two: “Authentic Alpine: Scientific Knowledge and Natural Description in Kojima Usui’s Mountain Writing”

I cannot quite put the color of the Kiso River into words. I have heard that even clear, colorless water can take on a blue tint if the particles in the water became concentrated enough. The Kiso River’s blue-dyed water tumbles over a stone riverbed, made up of dark andesite in its upper reaches, and snow-white granite below that. The color of the water changes as it passes over the different rocks that form the river’s bottom, and the pure azure that one sees in certain sections of the river is without equal. Each night when I reached my lodging I sat in meditation and thought on the form of water. Occasionally I would suddenly awake to some understanding, as if it were the back of my own hand; but on further scrutiny, my understanding leaked back out from my cupped hands.

—Kojima Usui, “Kiso no keikoku” 木曾の溪谷

Kojima Usui advocated for the importance of scientific knowledge for effective literary depictions of natural scenery. Despite his protestations in “Kikōbun-ron” (On *kikōbun*, 1907), largely in response to critics of his writing, that his literature was not simply a blend of science and literature, Usui was clearly an advocate for a wide application of scientific knowledge throughout Japanese society. Besides his assertions of its importance for literary composition, he frequently promoted mountains and mountain climbing as central to the pursuit of scientific knowledge. And while he was always careful to disclaim any special expertise, Usui took seriously his own amateur scientific pursuits in the mountains, especially in relation to the field of glaciology.

While Usui’s discussion of science was at times ambivalent—he was careful to make strong distinctions between the respective purposes of science and literature, for example—it nevertheless comes out in his writings that he was devoted to the support of the scientific profession, by promoting mountain climbing as an essentially scientific endeavor, and to the

wider dissemination of scientific knowledge through his non-specialist writings on scientific subjects related to the mountains.

Usui's strong interest in science raises a number of questions. What did "science" mean to Japanese in the Meiji period? This is a fundamental question in attempting to understand how the idea of science was deployed by Usui and others when discussing modern Japanese literature. As Federico Marcon reminds us in his study of natural history and the construction of knowledge in Edo-period Japan (1603–1868), science is not "an ahistorical and neutral meter of judgment...in other words, [science] is not an ahistorical form of knowledge that transparently reflects an ordered reality but a discipline encompassing a variety of fields of study that emerged in a particular historical moment and context under particular socio-intellectual conditions."¹ In other words, the "science" that Meiji literary critics lauded or lambasted in their discussions of literary texts is not a neutral, universal set of truths about the natural world that the newly "modernized" Japanese were gaining access to; nor is it an essentially European discovery that was merely being imported and adopted in Meiji Japan.

Of course this is a rich and complex issue, and I do not propose to define "Meiji science" in the scope of this dissertation. However, texts about the mountains and mountain climbing, both scientific and literary, interacted with one another, blending, juxtaposing, and "harmonizing"—*chōwa* 調和 was a term commonly used in discussions of texts that sought to bring together literary and scientific discourse—disparate rhetorical styles. By looking more closely at these interactions, I will show that both literature and science in the Meiji period were contingent and constitutive categories. Situating Meiji science in its own particular "historical, social, cultural, and material context" is important not only for understanding what influence it

¹ Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 25.

had on the development of modern Japanese literature.² Reciprocally, the discourse around science in literature, insofar as it was a part of the historical context of Meiji science, should be understood as having as much influence on the development of science as a cultural activity.

The above question is concerned with the understanding of science as an historical discipline practiced by specialists; what of the relationship of science to non-specialists? In other words, what was the popular conception of science? In order to understand how Usui and others used science in their writings, and what effect, if any, this had on the practice of science, it is important to understand that relationship in terms of the “popularization of science.” This term, used in the history of science, refers to the study of

both the social structure of scientific practice and the complex relations between science and the public...the study of this relationship between scientific elites and lay people comprises not only the production and formulation of scientific knowledge, but also its appropriation by audiences with various cultural, social and expertise profiles.³

Including in my consideration of the historical context of science not only scientific production but also its communication to a wider audience will help shed light, for example, on the apparent contradiction between Usui’s protestations against attempting to harmonize science and literature, on the one hand, and his introduction of the latest Japanese glaciology research to his lay audience, on the other. What motivated Usui, a dedicated popularizer and admitted non-specialist, to use scientific discourse in such diverse ways in his writing? I will consider the way that specifically popularization-oriented discourse is deployed in the writing of Usui and other literary figures in order to better understand the artistic, political, and ideological motivations that undergirded such efforts.

² Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, p. 25.

³ Pedro Ruiz-Castell, “Popularization of Science,” in *Beyond Borders: Fresh Perspectives in History of Science*, eds. Anthony Enns and Carolyn Birdsall (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), p. 171.

These questions about the nature and status of scientific thought will help orient my analysis of Usui's and others' texts in this chapter. While the questions outlined above provide context and direct my inquiry, the questions that I will answer in this chapter are: Why did Usui and other writers invoke science in the first place? What did notions such as "scientific knowledge" and "objectivity" mean to these writers? At the same time, how did their discussion of such terms actively construct the categories of science and literature?

Explaining the increased interest historians of science have had in the study of science popularization, Pedro Ruiz-Castell notes that "popularization of science acquired significance as a rhetorical tool for public authority, used to legitimate science and to obtain economic and social support."⁴ In fact, science had already gained legitimacy by the turn of the twentieth century in Japan, providing, for example, authority for policy decisions regarding public health and hygiene.⁵

In this chapter, I argue that it was precisely because of the authority held by science that writers decided to wield it themselves. In various capacities, science had lent an air of authority and authenticity to other cultural practices since even before the Meiji period. Especially given the emphasis in the Meiji literary establishment on the precision of language and the candid revelation of personal experience, it is no surprise that modern authors seeking to legitimate certain literary practices would call on science to authenticate their own writing.

Usui sought through *sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学 (mountain literature) to establish *kikōbun* 紀行文 (travel writing) —envisioned as a mode of writing about nature from the

⁴ Ruiz-Castell, "Popularization of Science," p. 172.

⁵ In the West, Richard S. Westfall argues that science had already gained enough authority by the late seventeenth century to provide even more authority than theology in matters of scripture: "Where Bellarmino had employed Scripture to judge a scientific opinion, both Burnet and Newton used science to judge the validity of Scripture. To speak merely of the autonomy of science does not seem enough; we need to speak rather of its authority, to which theology had now become subordinate." Richard S. Westfall, "The Scientific Revolution Reasserted," in *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution*, ed. Margaret J. Osler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 50.

perspective of an observing human subject—as an equal counterpart to what he saw as the human-oriented *shōsetsu* 小説 (prose fiction). In this chapter, I will consider a part of that process that has not been acknowledged in previous scholarship on Usui. In his *kikōbun* theory, Usui establishes science as an objective authority on natural phenomena, then argues that a complete view of nature requires a subjective—i.e. artistic—approach to complement the objective. This does not merely parallel the *kikōbun-shōsetsu* juxtaposition explored in the last chapter; it is a necessary step to establish *kikōbun* as a legitimate medium for depicting nature.

It was only natural that Usui would view science as a useful tool to provide authority to his proposed literary genre. His writing is characterized by descriptions of natural scenery that frequently go beyond descriptions of shape, color, and other aesthetic features to include speculations on the orogenic processes that produced notable rock formations, the historical distribution of flower species, and other things that indicate a more-than-passing interest in and knowledge of the science of alpine environments. And his literary publications include essays that are almost entirely scientific in aim; for example, Usui was particularly interested in debates over whether or not Japan had experienced glaciation, or still hid any glaciers in its less-explored heights, and he wrote essays summarizing and opining on the most recent research on the subject. Finally, the journal *Sangaku* 山岳 (Mountains) was as much an organ for the mountaineering members of the scientific community to report about their research to interested non-scientist JAC members as it was for the literary travel writing of the JAC members.

At the same time, science was not merely a literary tool Usui used to bolster his literary credentials. As passionate as he was about establishing *kikōbun* and *sangaku bungaku* as legitimate literary genres, he was perhaps above all inspired by the mountains themselves. Mountains were as much a source of scientific knowledge about the world as they were a source

of literary truth, and he encouraged Japan's youth to develop Japan's alpine science as well as its literature—indeed, a portion of Usui's writing was dedicated to introducing scientific knowledge and engendering further interest in its practice. I will argue that Usui saw science as dynamic, not merely a storehouse of knowledge for artists to use but a developing field that writers could participate in, in certain ways, as much as they borrowed from it.

Usui's *sangaku bungaku* thus represents an opportunity to consider the complex interactions that obtained between the young fields of modern literature and modern science in Meiji Japan. By analyzing the rhetorical and stylistic idiosyncrasies of discourse that actively sought to bring science and literature together into a relationship of mutual influence, and placing that analysis within the broader context of historically and culturally specific scientific production and reception, I will add to our understanding of how modern literature developed during the Meiji period.

The “science” of Usui's literary critique

At first glance, the attitude Usui expresses in his critical writings, and the position indicated by his praxis, towards science in literature appears contradictory. At times he is strongly in favor of writers thoroughly researching the place they are writing about and including detailed information in their *kikōbun*; on the other hand, he frequently tries to distance himself from outwardly scientific writing. However, this seemingly contradictory position is not, in fact, an outright denial of the place of science in literature. Usui's occasional retraction of his support of scientific knowledge in literary practice should instead be understood as a strategic readjustment of his discourse in response to the reception of his work in literary circles. If Usui appears to deny science, it is merely to resist the impression that he is a science writer. His goal was to

refashion *kikōbun* into a genre of artistic literature; some of his early work was seen as having so much “scientific” detail that it became a hybrid, and could no longer be considered purely literary.⁶ As shown in the previous chapter, he rearticulated the role of science in literature in “Kikōbun-ron” 紀行文論 (On *kikōbun*) and “Kikōbun shōron” 紀行文小論 (A few words on *kikōbun*) in 1907, and his subsequent writing shows a gradual shift in how he applied scientific knowledge in *kikōbun* writing. If scientific knowledge of nature was essential for creating literature that was an authentic representation of the author’s experience of a place, the writer’s subjective responses to their experience were necessary for maintaining the literary quality of the writing. Usui seems to deny the centrality of scientific knowledge to his *kikōbun*, but this was merely part of his ongoing attempts to create a genre of Japanese mountain literature that could encompass both hard facts about mountain environments, and the subjective response of the writer-cum-climber to those environments.

Kumagai Akihiro 熊谷明宏 has already noted Usui’s “radical” stance vis-à-vis science in *kikōbun*, pointing out that while other writers were more interested in flowery prose or “local color,” Usui was concerned with “techniques that would guarantee ‘accuracy’ in light of the knowledge of various fields of natural science.”⁷ But Kumagai does not interrogate the discursive meanings “science” had in Usui’s and others’ writing—he appears to accept it as a stable signifier, as have most scholars who have noted Usui’s interest in “science.”

What exactly did science mean to Usui, then? And why was Usui concerned in particular with “accuracy” (*seikaku* 正確 or *tadashisa* 正しさ)? In fact, as Kumagai himself points out, the

⁶ Of course the issue of what made a text literary was precisely what was under debate in the Meiji *bundan* 文壇 (literary world). See chapter 2 for more discussion of the parameters that would have defined what was “literary” for Usui and his critics.

⁷ Kumagai Akihiro, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no “shinpo” to janru no jiritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni” 明治後期における紀行文の「進歩」とジャンルの自立性—小島烏水の理論と実践を中心に (PhD dissertation, Dōshisha University, 2014), p. 48.

focus on scientific knowledge and accuracy in *kikōbun* was not specific to Usui. I would argue that Usui was responding to a more general concern for increasing scientific knowledge and setting standards based on that knowledge in Meiji Japan.

“Scientist” and “scientific knowledge” in Usui

Usui spoke strongly about the benefits of scientific knowledge for *kikōbun* writers from relatively early in his career. In 1901, he published an essay introducing a new *kikōbun* column he had established in the journal *Bunko* 文庫, “Honran ni tsukite” 本欄に就きて. In the essay, he encourages *kikōbun* writers to include topics such as climate and geology in their research and writing, with the goal of creating a “precise record and critique” of the places they visit and write about in their travelogues.⁸ Though he does not use the term “science” specifically in this essay, he refers to “geology, weather, flora, fauna, astronomy” as elements that *kikōbun* writers should include in addition to the florid landscape descriptions of traditional Japanese travel literature; he also includes “customs, manners, language, and industry,” but he separates these into a different group from the former five elements, indicating that the two groups constitute distinct categories.⁹ In this essay, Usui clearly values descriptions of the landscape that are rooted in details of the natural environment more highly than the conventional contemplation of established famous places, though he does not specifically recommend scientific study or research.

In contrast, Usui referred to science (*kagaku* 科学) and scientists (*kagakusha* 科学者) specifically and frequently in his writing beginning only a few years later, when he was more

⁸ Kojima Usui, “Honran ni tsukite,” in vol. 4 of *Kojima Usui zenshū* 小島烏水全集 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1979) [hereafter KUZS], p. 453.

⁹ “Honran ni tsukite,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 454.

established as a travel and mountain writer. Usui characterizes scientists as aiming to describe “causes, effects, and understand interior structure and organization”¹⁰—they “try to understand nature on the basis of experiments and analysis.”¹¹ But the details of the natural world revealed by scientific work are dry and sterile; “there is nature, but no humanity,” and this makes scientific knowledge alone unfit for literature.¹² Scientists “pick at every little thing” because “they want to understand the reasons behind the universe,” and in order to do this “reason alone remains in their head and they almost entirely lose their individuality...they try to describe the thing as it is [*aru ga mama* 在るがまゝ].”¹³ Additionally, Usui expresses the view that “the true aim of science is to improve the welfare of mankind,” lamenting that this lofty goal has been muddied by “pragmatism,” by people obsessed with making profits and improving human life through ‘science’—in other words, though science is sometimes compromised by material concerns for wealth, its fundamental goal should be to contribute to human knowledge of nature.¹⁴

Through Usui’s references to science and scientists from pieces published between 1905 and 1907, we can cobble together a relatively stable image of Meiji scientists as Usui envisioned them; in turn, this image appears to accord with the typical popular image of scientists at the time. While Usui’s image of scientists First of all, the scientist was a professional. This seems to be consistent with the contemporary public image of scientists: in his study of Meiji science, Bartholomew defines “scientist” as a holder of the *hakushi* 博士 degree, which “approximates the concept of ‘scientist’ operative among government officials and the public,” though the

¹⁰ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 382.

¹¹ “Kikōbun-shōron,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 393–94.

¹² “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan” 南アルプスの南半, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 56.

¹³ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 57.

¹⁴ “Shizenbi-ron” 自然美論, in KUZS, v. 4, p. 232.

concept is slippery because the social role of the scientist was still being established during the Meiji period.¹⁵ Usui also characterizes scientists as, at least ideally, unconcerned with the market applications of their research. This, too, is reinforced by Bartholomew's observation that most scientists were pro-research and were not overly influenced by business interests or university enrollment standards.¹⁶ Usui also mentions several elements that are considered hallmarks of modern science (as opposed to natural history, natural philosophy, etc.), including experimentation, quantification, and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. This distinction is important in Meiji Japan: in contrast to the perceived lack of rigor of previous models of scholarship, it was these characteristics of modern science that imbued it with authority, that enabled it to create reliable knowledge about the natural world.

It is worth noting, however, that Usui's description of professional science may have been slightly more nuanced than the typical primary school educated Japanese citizen in the Meiji period. According to Akabane Akira, historians of education in Japan have interpreted the 1891 *Shōgakkō kyōsoku taikō* 小学校教則大綱 (Principles of primary school education) as marking a fundamental change in the way science was taught in primary school: "it has been understood as a transition from a scientific [*kagaku*, as professional scientific practice] education with an emphasis on unseen scientific [*kagakuteki* 科学的] principles, to a science [*rika* 理科, as a school subject] education focused on visible natural phenomena."¹⁷ The measure, a document outlining the institution of measures related to science education in primary school, mentions

¹⁵ James R. Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan: Building a Research Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 51.

¹⁶ Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan*, p. 90.

¹⁷ Akabane Akira 赤羽明, "Meijiki ni okeru butsurei, kagaku, seibutsu, hakubutsu kara rika e no tenkan—"Shōgakkō seito-yō butsurei-sho" to hikaku shite—"明治期における物理, 化学, 生物, 博物から理科への転換 —『小学校生徒用物理書』と比較して—, in *Saitama Ika Daigaku igaku kiso bumon kiyō* 埼玉医科大学医学基礎部門紀要 10 (2004), p. 21.

observation, field study, and basic experiments among the methods employed in teaching primary school science, with the ultimate goal of “cultivating a love of natural things.”¹⁸ Usui’s mention of scientists’ goal of understanding “causes, effects,” and the “interior structure and organization” of things indicates that the professionally-trained scientist went beyond “visible natural phenomena” to investigate “unseen scientific principles,” a concept outside of the realm of “science” as it was taught to almost 90% of the population for much of the Meiji period.¹⁹

This reflects one more notable feature of science that comes out in Usui’s usage of the term: the scientist’s work is specialized, and relatively inaccessible to the average person. Thus he explains that books such as Shiga Shigetaka’s (1863–1927) *Nihon fūkei-ron* 日本風景論 (On Japanese landscape, 1894) and his own *Nihon sansui-ron* 日本山水論 (On Japanese nature, 1905) are intended to help a general audience swallow the “bitter pill” of science.²⁰ In other words, scientists accumulate important knowledge about the world, but Usui argues that that knowledge alone is not enough for humans to appreciate the beauty of the natural world. The *kikōbun* writer thus becomes a mediator between nature—the physical environment, down to the finest details science has revealed about it—and humans, who experience nature, have subjective reactions to it, and ascribe value to their experiences.

It should be noted that Usui’s description of scientists and their work is partly rhetorical. Most of the essays cited here are concerned with carving out a literary niche for travel writing and mountain writing, and in some cases he discusses science and scientists as a contrast to literature. Nevertheless, his usage is still revealing about how he viewed science and how he

¹⁸ Akabane, “Meijiki ni okeru butsurei,” p. 19.

¹⁹ From the establishment of four years of compulsory education in 1872, only a small portion of the population advanced to secondary and higher education. By the end of the Meiji period, the percentage of male and female students continuing to secondary education still had not broken 15%. See “Chūtō kyōiku no fukyū to joshi kyōiku no shinkō” 中等教育の普及と女子教育の振興, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, accessed January 24, 2019, http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/hakusho/html/hpad196201/hpad196201_2_012.html.

²⁰ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 380.

viewed the social role of science and its practitioners. Despite Bartholomew's claim that the role of the scientist was not clearly defined throughout the Meiji period, Usui at least had a sense that "science" and "scientist" were stable enough signifiers that they could be used in this kind of rhetorical movement. Usui's rhetorical application of "science" and "scientist" suggests that the concepts had enough of a public presence that they could be used as a foil for theorizing about literature.

Much of what Usui has to say about professional scientists is related to what a *kikōbun* writer is *not*. Yet he placed great value on the knowledge produced by science in the context of literary composition. In his discussions of the necessity of background research for an author writing about nature, what did Usui mean when he referred to scientific knowledge?

Usui often refers to very specific facts about natural features of the landscape, using precise terminology to list the names of flowers or rock types he sees. On this practice, he complains in "Kikōbun-ron" that even using the precise name of a rock is seen as "too scientific," arguing that in the same way that an author would not simply describe a pine tree without referring to it by name, "it is not sufficient to just describe a rock like 'gneiss' as 'a rock that looks like whitish granite with black sesame-seed like dots'"—in this case, he blames the perception of his kind of writing as too scientific on what he sees as an overall low standard of knowledge in the general population.²¹

But scientific knowledge is more than just an issue of diction. In "Yama to murasakiiro" 山と紫色 (Mountains and the color purple, 1904), Usui begins by commenting on the cultural-historical association between Mount Tsukuba and the color purple, and more generally on the association of the color purple with mountains, both in Japan and in the west. At the end of the

²¹ "Kikōbun-ron," in KUZS, v. 5, p. 387.

essay, he changes tone, analyzing the physical properties of granitic mountains that produce the characteristic purple hue. He explains that “the principle components [of granite], quartz, orthoclase, and mica, of course, and even components like plagioclase feldspar and amphibole, are all lustrous minerals,” and that “when all these colors [of the different minerals] combine, how could they produce anything other than the color purple.”²²

In another essay, “Kawa no bikan” 川の美観 (The beauty of rivers, 1906), Usui uses flowery, classical language—rather unusual at this point in his career, when most of his writing was in a more modern style—in an ode to the beauty of mountain rivers. Yet in one section he explains *why* the rivers are so beautiful, using as evidence details of the mechanisms of river formation and flow. In a section identifying speed as one aspect of fluvial aesthetics, he explains how a river’s current is composed of main and secondary currents, and goes on to explain how these change based on the relative hardness of rocks in the stream, the geometry of the streambed, and so on.²³

Usui’s “scientific knowledge,” then, refers not just to superficial information about the natural scenery such as the names of rocks and plants. Despite his qualification that “a writer does not need to understand how and why” in the way that a scientist does, he frequently goes beyond mere geological or botanical identification, to explain the processes underlying the formation of particular rock features, or the geographical distribution of a species of plant.²⁴

It is important to note that, as Usui insists repeatedly, this kind of information cannot be produced except by professional scientists, and even then, the information remains relatively inaccessible to non-specialists. As noted above, Usui’s invocation of notions of scientific

²² “Yama to murasakiro,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 161.

²³ “Kawa no bikan,” in KUZS, v. 5, pp. 430–31.

²⁴ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 382.

practice and knowledge was part of a rhetorical strategy for constructing his literary theory. It becomes apparent through the foregoing analysis of his references to science that Usui saw science as isolated: information not readily intelligible to the average person, that can only be produced by professionals with the requisite knowledge and skills. Usui used this exclusivity of science in a number of ways: he used science as a foil for literature, as an example of what literature is *not*; paradoxically, he also argued for the benefit of scientific knowledge for writing about nature; then again, he constructed science and literature in a symbiotic relationship, and even seemed to advocate for literature as a kind of mediator for and advocate of science. Having outlined what “scientist” and “scientific knowledge” meant for Usui, I will now attempt to unpack the seemingly contradictory roles they played in his discourse.

Science vs. literature: An exercise in contrast

Regarding the contrast between science and literature, Usui felt a pressing need to distance himself from associations with science at one point in his career. As shown in the previous chapter, Usui took strong exception to criticisms of his work as being “applied literature” and a “harmony of science and literature”—his work was read as being too analytical and detailed in the descriptions, and lacking in a subjective, human touch. His response, outlined in the previous chapter, was a vehement denial of any intention of making his *kikōbun* scientific, and a reassertion of his primary goal of writing *literary* depictions of nature.

Usui’s separation of science and literature was not always a stark denial. Usui wrote a companion piece to “Kikōbun-ron” during the same summer excursion to the Southern Alps,

“Kai sangaku no keitaibi” 甲斐山岳の形態美 (The formal beauty of the Kai Mountains²⁵, 1907), which he intended as a treatise on methods for researching and analyzing a subject before writing a *kikōbun*. At the beginning of the essay, he explains that there are two ways of considering mountains: intellectually, from a scientific and naturalistic viewpoint; and aesthetically, for pleasure and recreation. But while the two are not mutually exclusive, and in fact share common goals, they are nevertheless fundamentally separate. Usui’s focus in the present essay is on the aesthetic appreciation of mountains, though he makes clear that this is not an ascription of value, but merely a practicality of not being able to deal with both at once.

Having asserted the distinction between scientific and aesthetic appreciation of mountains, Usui defines the latter in contrast to the former. Essentially, he argues that each viewpoint is limited in what it reveals about a subject. Evolutionary scientists, biologists, and psychologists can yield “a general understanding of human existence, but this is merely an abstraction,” and these hard scientific facts can reveal nothing about the character of individual people; in the same way, one can read and learn all about Mount Fuji, but ultimately “Fuji is more than just an object made up of rock and grass. The Mount Fuji whose visage has been imprinted at the back of my mind is not such a lonely, pitiful thing. It is the Fuji extolled by the master poet Akahito.”²⁶ Put another way, the basic distinction between the two approaches is a difference between objective and subjective reality: “If hammers and microscopes are witnesses

²⁵ “Kai” refers to the premodern province, Kai no kuni 甲斐国 (abbreviated Kōshū 甲州), located in present-day Yamanashi Prefecture. Usui explains that he uses the term “Kai Mountains” as an alternative to “Southern Alps,” coterminous with the same range today, adding that the Okuchichibu Mountains might also be included under the umbrella term. “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 298.

²⁶ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 286–87. Usui is referring to Yamabe no Akahito’s 山部赤人 (fl. 724–736) poem extolling the beauty of virtue of Mount Fuji, one of the oldest extant mentions of the mountain, which appears in the *Man’yōshū*, 3:317–318. For a translation and discussion, see Haruo Shirane, *Traditional Japanese Literature: An Anthology, Beginnings to 1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), pp. 60–61.

that profess third-person, objective reality, then emotion and awareness are the witnesses that assert my subjective reality.”²⁷

This is an important step in Usui’s construction of *kikōbun*. Usui has already established science as the authoritative source of knowledge about the natural world. Here, he qualifies that attitude by suggesting that art (represented by the aesthetic approach to viewing mountains) is as valid as science in contemplating nature; in fact, it is necessary in order to gain a fuller understanding of nature: “Only when we embrace an aesthetic sensibility can our hearts fully grasp the mountains, and our souls roam among them.”²⁸ Indeed, this rhetorical move is parallel to, and an essential step towards, Usui’s ultimate argument that *kikōbun* should be to the natural world what *shōsetsu* is to the human world. Usui demonstrates here that art, including literary art like *kikōbun*, reveals an aspect of truth about nature that complements that revealed by science.

Taken together, “Kai sangaku no keitaibi” and “Kikōbun-ron,” which were written on the same occasion and were intended to be companion pieces according to Usui’s introduction to the former upon its initial publication in *Sangaku*, represent a two-pronged approach to Usui’s *kikōbun* project. Other scholars such as Kondō and Kumagai have already pointed out the strategic positioning of *kikōbun* vis-à-vis *shōsetsu*, and I have further explicated this issue in the previous chapter. The related move I have shown here, of positioning art vis-à-vis science as both a necessary complement to science and a valid lens to nature in its own right, is a significant component of Usui’s *kikōbun* theory that has not been acknowledged in previous scholarship.

²⁷ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 287.

²⁸ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 287.

Science for literature: Edifying the author through scientific knowledge

By presenting science and art as contrasting and complementary, Usui lays the groundwork to claim that the two can work together to reveal the truth of nature more fully. As I have already shown in the previous chapter, Usui repeatedly asserts that knowledge of the inner workings of natural phenomena can help a writer better to understand the subtleties of shape, color, and so on. Much of “Kikōbun-ron” and “Kikōbun shōron” is dedicated to just this topic: what role scientific knowledge plays in the *kikōbun* writer’s work. But Usui takes a negative approach in these essays. He is responding to criticism that his work was *too* scientific, and in an effort to distance himself from such claims, he appears to diminish the role of scientific knowledge in *kikōbun*, relegating it to a minimal supporting role. Scientific knowledge is meant to provide the scaffolding for the *kikōbun* writer to craft an effective narrative, but should not be too conspicuous in the final product—scientific knowledge is a means to an end.

In “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” on the other hand, Usui argues from a more positive position, claiming that science and art can work together to create a greater whole. Using a metaphor of an embroidered cloth, Usui suggests that “we must rely on knowledge to understand how each thread is connected to the larger tapestry,” but “the beautiful pattern on the face of the cloth is created not by threads of knowledge, but by the aesthetic sense of the people who create that knowledge.”²⁹ The dualistic composition of this beauty, and of the means of understanding it, becomes more defined in the modern world, where science has both elucidated the internal mechanisms of natural phenomena and deepened their mystery and allure: Mountains “are not of the present” and “not of this world; the people of the past did not have our assorted knowledge and concepts,, so they simply feared, revered, and praised the mountains; the people of the

²⁹ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, p. 292.

present cannot look at them with the same simplistic gaze, and there is a stark difference between knowing and feeling.”³⁰ In other words, modern science has revealed all kinds of information about the natural world, complicating the more religious and aesthetic responses the people of the past had to mountains. But that leaves us with a divide, between our objective knowledge of the mountain and the subjective experience of it.

This is where the writer comes in. The scientist experiments, analyzes, and tells us more about the world, while the *kikōbun* writer synthesizes the results of the scientists’ work with his experience traveling in the mountain, and creates a narrative that depicts the mountain and the human experience of it.

Even though before I praised aesthetic observation and elevated the position of the subjective “I,” in the following I am going to analyze material beauty intellectually, based on psychology and experience; I am going to combine the subjective “I” with objective nature and consider their mutual relationship, in order to justify the use of intellectual knowledge as evidence.³¹

Again, this complements the arguments in “Kikōbun-ron,” where Usui had to contend with claims that his *kikōbun* lacked the introspective, subjective voice that responded to the people and places encountered on a journey and defined the *kikōbun* genre for his critics. Here, he is able to temper his definition of *kikōbun*, arguing for a better balance between the subject and the object.

In the latter section of “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” Usui gives specific examples of how scientific knowledge can be applied to literary discussions of landscapes to elucidate their aesthetic value. He explains that the beauty of the mountains seen from the Kai Plain is special because the mountain range is so visible and stark in its elevation, something you don’t get in Shinshū or Hida, citing details about their elevations and local topography to explain how their

³⁰ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, pp. 289–90.

³¹ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, pp. 291.

view differs.³² Usui also includes an interesting discussion of Mount Fuji and why its silhouette is pleasing to the eye, including details about both how the volcano's formation contributed to its present shape, and how it is appreciated aesthetically.³³

Usui did not intend discussions like the above to be examples of how to apply scientific knowledge in the final product of *kikōbun* composition—I will look more closely at the way scientific knowledge was put into practice in *kikōbun* descriptions in chapter 3. As Usui explains in “Kikōbun-ron,” the writer's scientific knowledge should not be so obvious on the surface of literary prose. Rather, Usui is attempting to explain how the writer can use details of the mountain to understand it at a deeper level, going beyond their own subjective responses to it. This understanding allows the artist to create a more authentic depiction of the mountain. Usui cites Katsushika Hokusai's (1760–1849) depictions of Mount Fuji³⁴ as an example of how scientific knowledge can allow the artist to manipulate their material to create certain effects?; Hokusai's Fuji has a significantly exaggerated gradient on the upper slopes, creating a heightened sense of grandiosity.³⁵

In “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” Usui gives a more optimistic view of the relationship between science and literature, showing how scientific knowledge can be recruited for a more balanced literary treatment of the natural environments *kikōbun* writers depict. While his advocacy for scientific knowledge in literary composition seems to be at odds with his vehement denial of “harmony of science and literature” elsewhere, in fact these two rhetorical stances work in tandem, serving different strategic functions in Usui's negotiations with the literary

³² “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, p. 294.

³³ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, p. 298–301.

³⁴ Famously collected in *Fugaku Sanjūrokkei* 富嶽三十六景 (Thirty-six views of Mount Fuji, c. 1831).

³⁵ “Kai sangaku no keitaibi,” in KUZS, vol. 5, p. 301.

establishment, while ultimately serving the same goal of creating a modern *kikōbun* genre with a focus on authentic literary depictions of nature.

Literature for science: Bringing science to a wider audience

As a writer, Kojima Usui was first and foremost a travel writer and essayist. But Usui was also one of the leading figures in the dawn of modern mountaineering in Meiji Japan. He was the central organizer for the establishment of the Japanese Alpine Club in 1905, and he was officially installed as the first president of the Club in 1933. Usui was passionate about recreating in and learning about the mountains, and he used his writing to spread that passion as widely as possible. He did not only advocate for mountain climbing and writing, however; he was vocal about the opportunities the mountains presented for inspiring and training Japan's youth to join the nation's growing scientific community. Not himself a scientist, Usui was equally motivated to spread specialized knowledge of the mountains more broadly to non-specialists. In much of his writing, Usui encouraged scientists and lay-people alike to appreciate the mountains not only for their beauty and power, but also for the details of their formation and constitution.

Kären Wigen has analyzed how “alpine ideologues” like Usui and Shiga Shigetaka moved Japan's mountains from the periphery “and onto center stage for a new pedagogical project.”³⁶ According to Wigen, “the project for which mountains were moved in the Meiji period was not a recreational but an educational one; what was ultimately discovered...was a resource for geographical enlightenment.”³⁷ In other words, mountain climbing could be a form

³⁶ Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 2005), p. 2.

³⁷ Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” p. 26.

of fieldwork for Japan's young scientists, a way for them to gain a new perspective on the world they studied.

In “Tozan-ron” 登山論 (On mountaineering, 1902), Usui analyzes the sport of mountaineering from various perspectives, making a case for its benefits to the nation of Japan and its people. Usui dedicates sections of the essay to physical health, ambition and perseverance, and spirit of adventure, all essential for the young people who are “the energy of the nation”,³⁸ however, “the unique benefit of mountaineering is how it contributes to academic research,” and it is this benefit that separates mountaineering from other “children's pastimes.”³⁹ Usui mentions several researchers and the contributions they have made to science, from John Tyndall (1820–1893) and Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) in Europe, to the successes (and failures) of Japanese climatologists Nonaka Itaru 野中至 (1867–1955) and Tonno Kōtarō 頓野廣太郎 (1859–1898).

As referenced above, Usui at times lamented the relative lack of scientific knowledge in the general populace, which he viewed as one of the causes of his writing being seen as too “scientific.” In addition to his encomiums to the youth of Japan to take up the torch of alpine scientific research, Usui also frequently wrote with the purpose of educating readers about the latest knowledge about Japanese mountains. Usui was particularly interested in the debate in the scientific community surrounding the issue of glaciation in Japan.⁴⁰ He had followed the debate

³⁸ “Tozan-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 41.

³⁹ “Tozan-ron,” in KUZS, v.5, p. 52.

⁴⁰ Yamasaki Naomasa 山崎直方 (1870–1929) was the leading figure in this debate, first proposing that Japan did have a history of glaciation after discovering a boulder with characteristic parallel gouges in the Shirouma Daisekkei 白馬大雪溪 valley. He started the debate with his 1902 publication of an essay, “Hyōga hatashite honpō ni sonzai sezarishi ka” 氷河果して本邦に存在せざりしか (Is it certain that glaciers have not existed in Japan?), *Chishitsugaku zasshi* 地質學雜誌, 9, no. 109 (October 1902), pp. 361–369. The debate was ongoing until very recently, when three glaciers were confirmed on Mount Tsurugi and Mount Tateyama in the Japanese Northern Alps in 2012.

since Naomasa's seminal publication in 1902, and even published his own response to the issue in 1912 in an essay titled "Nihon Arupusu hyōga mondai—hyōga hatashite honpō ni sonzai shitarishi ka" 日本アルプス氷河問題—氷河果して本邦に存在したりしか (The Japanese Alps glacier problem—Is it certain that glaciers have existed in Japan?), published in his book *Nihon Arupusu daisan-kan* 日本アルプス第三卷 (Japanese Alps, volume 3).⁴¹

In this and another essay published in the same volume, Usui discusses the possibility of the existence of glaciers in Japan, referencing the work of specialists who have been investigating the issue. He disclaims from the beginning that he is "a compiler of expert's opinions, but not a judge of them," and certainly not an expert himself, and he frames his discussion in the context of informing his readers, which included climbers, writers, and artists as well as scientists, on the details of the subject.⁴² Usui presents himself as a middleman between the technical side of glaciology research and the uninformed general populace—he takes on the role of a "popularizer of science," translating the technical and making it more accessible to the layperson, spreading knowledge of and interest in Japan's natural environment.

Other writers on literature and science

Usui was not the only Meiji writer who was using literature and science in tandem to promote general interest in the sciences. In 1906, Miyoshi Manabu⁴³ and Makino Tomitarō⁴⁴ published

⁴¹ "Nihon Arupusu to hyōga mondai—hyōga hatashite honpō ni sonzai shitarishi ka," in KUZS, v. 7, pp. 368–97.

⁴² "Nihon Arupusu to hyōga mondai," in KUZS, v. 7, p. 368.

⁴³ Miyoshi Manabu 三好學 (1861–1939) was a professor of botany at the University of Tokyo and an important figure in the early history of botany as a scientific discipline in Japan. He is also credited with coining the Japanese term for ecology, *seitaigaku* 生態学, and being an early voice for the preservation of Japanese landscapes and species in the form of "natural monuments" *tennen kinenbutsu* 天然記念物. He was interested in mountaineering, and he gave a talk which was published as "Yamanobori no hanashi" 山登りの話 (A talk on mountain climbing) in 1890.

Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan 日本高山植物圖譜第一卷 (Illustrated survey of Japanese alpine plants, volume 1). The plant entries are brief, containing name, location, flowering period, and additional brief notes. The entries are given in both Japanese and English, and there are also both an English and Japanese preface. The significant differences between the prefaces in the two languages are notable.

The English preface to the 1907 revised edition defines the term “alpine plants,” explains the elevation-based vegetation habitats into which alpine environments are organized, and situates the discussion geographically to Shinano 信濃, Hida 飛騨, and surrounding provinces—in other words, the central mountain ranges that were becoming known as the Japanese Alps. The preface ends with a statement of purpose: “We hope, that the present atlas may serve as an [sic] useful companion for mountain-tourists in Japan, to assist them in identifying the alpine plants, which they meet with on their way to the summits.”⁴⁵

The 1907 revised edition contains two Japanese prefaces: *Jo* 序, dated 1907, followed by *Reigen* 例言, which does not include a date. In the preface added for the 1907 edition, the authors simply note what has been updated in the new edition, and promise that future editions will continue to provide even more details. The *Reigen* begins with the observation that interest in the unique beauty of Japan’s alpine plants has grown in recent years, and cites the need for efforts not only to collect and catalog these plant species, but to protect them from destruction. The authors go on to explain the specific reasons for studying alpine plants—“not only do they

⁴⁴ Makino Tomitarō 牧野富太郎 (1862–1957) was another pioneering botanist associated with the University of Tokyo. He published an authoritative encyclopedia of Japanese botany, and was one of the original publishers of Japan’s first and oldest academic journal of botany, *Shokubutsugaku zasshi* 植物学雑誌 (Journal of Plant Research, 1882). He also published mountain *kikōbun* in *Sangaku*. See “Rishirisan to sono shokubutsu” 利尻山と其植物, *Sangaku* 1, no. 3 (1906), pp. 25–36.

⁴⁵ Miyoshi Manabu and Makino Tomitarō, English preface in *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan (teisei saihan)* (Tokyo: Seibidō, 1907), [1].

have horticultural novelty...in terms of form, anatomy, physiology, ecology, etc., they differ considerably from lowland vegetation” and knowledge of their distribution “will offer insight into the history of the formation of phytogeographical regions”⁴⁶—and finally give the same definition of the term *kōzan shokubutsu* 高山植物 and the elevation-based plant regions as provided in the English preface.

What becomes immediately apparent upon reading both prefaces is that the intended audience for each language is different. While the English preface, and by extension the English half of each entry, are intended for “mountain-tourists in Japan,” the Japanese version is directed towards botanists, or those who may be persuaded to take up the botanical sciences in the future. The western readers are only expected to “meet with” the alpine plants “on their way to the summits”—in other words, during their primary activity of climbing the mountains for leisure. In the Japanese preface, on the other hand, there is no mention of mountain climbing as an activity in its own right; it is only referenced obliquely through the mention of *saishū* 採集, the gathering of specimens, which necessarily takes place in the mountain environments where alpine plants grow. In reality, of course, scientific fieldwork and climbing as a sport were intertwined, but the focus in this volume is clearly on the scientific activities of alpine botanists. There is a clear emphasis on the authors’ call for Japanese botanists to “investigate thoroughly the varieties, names, habitats, and features of these plants” for the accumulation of knowledge and the preservation of alpine species.⁴⁷

The difference in emphasis is significant. It suggests that the gathering of knowledge about Japanese flora was seen as a specifically Japanese responsibility—while the English-language readers are encouraged to simply enjoy their holidays in the mountains, it falls to the

⁴⁶ Miyoshi and Makino, *Reigen* in *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan*, [1].

⁴⁷ Miyoshi and Makino, *Reigen* in *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan*, [1].

Japanese to fill in the blanks left by the information presented in the book, to add to the knowledge contained therein and contribute to the future editions promised in the *Jo* preface. This indicates that leading scientists in Meiji Japan felt that they were operating within a self-sufficient national scientific community, and were not reliant on notions of “Western science” or the contributions of European scientists. This is important in part because it marks a shift away from the reliance on *oyatoi gaikokujin* お雇い外国人⁴⁸ and an emphasis on Japanese scientists taking responsibility for advancing domestic research, which is reflected in Usui’s own calls for Japan’s youth to take up scientific work in the mountains.

Maeda Shozan 前田 畧山 (1872–1941) was another literary figure who professed a dedication to making scientific knowledge more accessible to the general population. An active *shōsetsu* author and member of the Ken’yūsha 硯友社 literary coterie, Shozan also published a number of works on horticulture and gardening. In his 1907 *Kōzan shokubutsu sōsho* 高山植物叢書 (Library of alpine plants), Shozan begins the preface with a statement of his goal for the publication: “With this book I hope to find a harmony between the avocations of science and literature, thereby making the tediously boring science more palatable to readers. My hope is that general interest in science will grow before the people are even aware of it.”⁴⁹ This not only parallels Usui’s similar efforts (and those Usui ascribes to Shiga Shigetaka) to make science “palatable” to non-scientific readers. It also repeats the educational goals expressed in the *Shōgakkō kyōsoku taikō*, of instilling in the general Japanese population an interest in nature and

⁴⁸ “Hired foreigners.” Advisors who were hired by the Japanese government to help train the first generation of Japanese specialists in scientific, technical, and other fields. William Gowland (1842–1922)—credited with coining the term “Japanese Alps”—was one such advisor, who worked as a chemical and metallurgical engineer for the Osaka Mint.

⁴⁹ Maeda Shozan, *Kōzan shokubutsu sōsho* (Tokyo: Kyōnandō, 1907), 1.

science. For Maeda, as for Usui, literature was an avenue for the popularization of science that played one role in a larger educational project.

He goes on to explain that in his previous publications on horticulture, his main aim was to cultivate popular interest in gardening, and he was afraid that too much technical language would have the opposite effect on an as yet uninitiated populace. By 1907, however, his audience is ripe for more specialized knowledge, so in *Kōzan shokubutsu sōsho* he provides readers with more detailed information about select plants.

The book contains detailed color sketches of the plants in question, which Shozan explains were based in almost all cases on the actual plants, with only a few exceptions being based on pressed specimens or second-hand sketches. Each entry begins with the Japanese and Linnaean classification of the plant, followed by a brief description of the plant's morphology (roots, stalk, leaves, and so on), which Shozan explains in the preface was provided by Shimura Urei.⁵⁰ Shozan then provides background information about the plant in difficult literary language. In the entry for *togakushi shōma* 戸隠升麻 (*Ranzania japonica*), for example, Shozan explains the mythical origin of the plant's namesake, Mount Togakushi, and situates the flower within that mythical past. His entries also include information such as historical literary references to the plants, and information on how they can be cultivated outside of their native alpine environments. Notably, though the language Shozan uses in his prose entries is in a difficult *kanbun kundokutai* 漢文訓読体 (Chinese-style prose transposed into Japanese grammatical forms) style, laden with complicated vocabulary and classical grammar, *furigana* 振

⁵⁰ Shimura Urei 志村烏嶺 (1874–1961) was a botanist, photographer, and mountain climber. Urei was an active contributor to the Japanese and British Alpine Clubs. The first photograph in the inaugural issue of *Sangaku* was taken by Urei, and a photograph he sent to Walter Weston was published in the *Alpine Journal* in 1906.

り仮名 are provided for all of the Chinese characters, presumably for the edification of his non-specialist audience.

His definition of “*kōzan shokubutsu*” (alpine plants) in the preface mirrors that of Miyoshi and Makino in *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan*. Shozan’s rationalization for his definition and his use of examples to qualify it suggest that his definition, while in line with the scholarly consensus, is arrived at independently, and not borrowed from a more authoritative source. Given that the two books were published less than a year apart, I would argue that the authors saw themselves as taking part in some of the same dialogues that scientists were in as they negotiated new terminology—literature was working in tandem with science to define the parameters of the field, rather than merely borrowing and transmitting information from the scientific community.

Using science’s popularization as a lens to analyze the history of science allows us to “blur the distinction between the making and the communication of knowledge and helps us to link practices such as science in the laboratory, science in the field, reading and pedagogy.”⁵¹ In Usui’s case, the communication of scientific research to his readers represents a link between numerous fields, from scientific field work and publication, to literature and aesthetics, to the political symbolism of having glaciated landscapes on the Japanese mainland. In many cases, Usui’s appropriation of science was largely rhetorical, as outlined in other sections of this chapter. Scientific practice and knowledge served as foils to artistic practice, in order to establish a contrast between the two; or as a framework of evidence for establishing the authenticity of artistic representations of nature.

⁵¹ Josep Simon and Néstor Herran, “Introduction,” in *Beyond Borders*, ed. Enns and Birdsall, 8.

But these cases of obvious educational intent suggest a different kind of relationship to science. While scientists such as Yamasaki were conducting research and teaching in the science departments of universities, Usui was taking part in the larger “pedagogical project” of making the scientific knowledge produced by scientists work for the nation. As climbers, scientists, and surveyors explored, catalogued, and mapped Japan’s highest and deepest mountain ranges, Usui and others brought the discoveries from these various fields together into the new image of the Japanese Alps, solidifying in the Japanese imaginary what were once peripheral and unconnected peaks. Japan’s main island had a new geological backbone, one that through its name—and through, for example, the proposition that it was glaciated like other great global mountain ranges—was put on par with the great peaks of Europe and the rest of the world. Demonstrating the scientific successes of researchers in Japan’s mountains to the general populace was one facet of the project to show the global stature of Japan’s natural environment.

I would also argue that the way Usui crosses disciplinary boundaries, both appropriating and disseminating images of science and the results of scientific work, allows us to reconsider the social role of science in the Meiji period. Bartholomew discusses science primarily in terms of its relationship to pure research, market applications, and government policy; the way Usui mobilizes science to discuss aesthetics, literary production, and Japan’s natural and cultural resources suggests a different way of understanding Meiji science: not only how it was practiced and regulated by professionals, but how it was understood and appropriated by the general population.

The authority of science: Scientific knowledge and authentic literature

Kojima Usui was, in the final estimation, a writer of mountain literature. Fujioka Nobuko even suggests that for Usui, writing came before the climbing itself: “Usui was not the alpinist who also wrote, but the writer who also climbed.”⁵² For all his rhetorical posturing and efforts to inform his readers about alpine science, Usui’s primary interest in the relationship between science and literature was how scientific knowledge could be used to refine *kikōbun* into a properly modern literary genre. For Usui, science held a position of authority: scientific knowledge provided a backdrop against which to authenticate literary depictions of nature against the real-world landscapes on which they were based.

Usui’s interest in making an “authentic” *kikōbun* genre was part and parcel of the general trend of modern Japanese literature toward a more realistic literary style. Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 (1859–1935) stressed the importance of realism in his treatise on the modern Japanese approximation of the novel, *Shōsetsu shinzui* 小説神髓 (Essence of the novel, 1885): “The primary aim of the *shōsetsu* is to portray human nature and behavior, basing its themes and content on things that exist in the real world.”⁵³ The notion of constructing realistic narratives so that they correspond as closely as possible to the real world is an important one, and comes to define much of mainstream *shōsetsu* literature in the Meiji literary scene.⁵⁴

⁵² Fujioka Nobuko, “Vision or Creation? Kojima Usui and the Literary Landscape of the Japanese Alps,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no. 4 (2002), p. 288.

⁵³ Tsubouchi Shōyō, *Shōsetsu shinzui, jō/ge-kan* (Tokyo: Shōgetsudō, 1887), <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/987668>

⁵⁴ Indeed, this principle was taken to the extreme in the case of *shizenshugi* 自然主義 (Japanese naturalism) and the *shishōsetsu* 私小説 (I-novel), where there was often expected to be a direct correspondence between the flesh-and-blood author’s life and the contents of the narrative.

Modes of seeing: Observation and objectivity

In order to reinvent *kikōbun* as a modern genre, Usui had to separate his version of travel writing from versions that were already established and thus incapable of being leveraged as a viable literary counterpart to *shōsetsu*. Among the most pressing issues that needed to be addressed in a modern update of Japanese travel literature (and indeed art in general) was the precision of depictions of nature. Usui treats this issue in his discussion of *shasei* 写生 (sketching from life) in “Kikōbun ni tsukite” 紀行文に就きて (On *kikōbun*, 1905). Usui complains that none of the established *kikōbun* writers have any sketching ability, and asserts that sketching is exactly what the genre needs: he lists poets, novelists, and artists who have used the technique, asking “why are only *kikōbun* writers not [using the technique]?”⁵⁵ A properly modern *kikōbun* would be distinguishable from these other genres because “if you are merely going to describe outlines or general ideas like a tall mountain, a short mountain, a big river, a small river, you might as well make up whatever scenery you like in the fashion of ‘the poet who learns about the famous places from the comfort of his home’”;⁵⁶ and it would stand apart from classical *kikōbun* like *The Tosa Diary*⁵⁷ and *The Sarashina Diary*⁵⁸ by describing discrete, observed scenes and events rather than relying on conventional patterns of describing famous places. In other words, Usui’s image of modern *kikōbun* required *shasei*-style sketching that was based on the personal observations of the writer, and not imagined from the comfort of a study or borrowed from poetic conventions.

⁵⁵ Kojima Usui, “Kikōbun ni tsukite,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 481.

⁵⁶ “Kikōbun ni tsukite,” in KUZS, v. 4, p. 478.

⁵⁷ *Tosa nikki* 土佐日記. A poetic travel diary written anonymously by Ki no Tsurayuki, c. 934. Arguably one of the first examples of the *kikōbun* genre.

⁵⁸ *Sarashina nikki* 更級日記. A poetic travel diary by the daughter of Sugawara no Takasue, 11th c. Another significant example of Heian travel literature.

What exactly did Usui mean when he discussed sketching? Though he uses the term frequently in his criticism, he does not define the term *shasei* here or elsewhere. Though he does not say so explicitly, Usui's discussion of *shasei* in "Kikōbun ni tsukite" relies on notions of scientific accuracy in the observation and depiction of nature. In the essay, he makes a distinction between *shasei* and *shashin* 写真 (photography): in photography, "once something enters the frame it is hard to remove, and the photographer can only exercise their own design to a certain extent," while the sketch artist "can depict complexity or simplicity as they desire, can abbreviate nine elements down to one, or can highlight one aspect and remove other distractions," allowing them to depict change (*henka* 変化) and movement (*katsudō* 活動).⁵⁹ This notion of change and movement is central to Usui's conceptualization of *kikōbun*. In "Kikōbun-ron" Usui states succinctly that "nature's vitality lies in movement and change,"⁶⁰ and argues that in order to depict this fundamental dynamic quality of nature, *kikōbun* authors "need the objective knowledge of the existence of differences."⁶¹ Usui distinguishes the *kikōbun* writer's research from professional scientific work, saying that "I felt the necessity to do my own research, but of course I wasn't a scientist, looking for reasons and causes and trying to explain inner workings."⁶² In other words, scientific knowledge of the natural scenery being observed, which could be gathered through secondary research by non-specialists, was a prerequisite for depicting movement and change, which was for Usui the unique purview of the *shasei*-style writing *kikōbun* so badly needed.

Shasei was an important term related to notions of authenticity in the literary developments that took place in the Meiji period. Usui used the term frequently, but his failure to

⁵⁹ "Kikōbun ni tsukite," in KUZZS, v. 4, p. 480.

⁶⁰ "Kikōbun-ron," in KUZZS, v. 5, pp. 375–76.

⁶¹ "Kikōbun-ron," in KUZZS, v. 5, p. 382.

⁶² "Kikōbun-ron," in KUZZS, v. 5, p. 382.

clearly define the term indicates that he took the stability of its meaning for granted. In 1907, two years after “Kikōbun ni tsukite” was published, Natsume Sōseki 夏目漱石 (1867–1916) observed this very problem in an essay titled “Shaseibun” (Literary sketching): “People champion *shaseibun*, but they take the special characteristics that distinguish it from regular prose for granted; it seems there has been no one to date who has clearly identified the features of *shaseibun*.”⁶³ Usui uses it unproblematically because, like other proponents of the literary technique, he assumes his readers do not need it to be explained. It follows that he sees his usage of the term—with its connotations of scientific accuracy—as being in line with the established definition.

However, the meaning of *shasei* was anything but settled. In her study of pictorial representations of natural objects in Edo-period *materia medica*, Maki Fukuoka considers *shasei* and the related terms *shashin* 写真 and *sha'i* 写意 as “best understood by envisioning them in constant flux.”⁶⁴ Fukuoka shows how for botanists, physicians, and other Edo-period practitioners of *materia medica* the term *shashin* represented a close identity between an object of inquiry, the name of that object, and its pictorial representation. This was combined with the assumption that the representation was based on the depicter’s real-life interaction with the actual object.

By the Meiji period, however, this complex of words had taken on different meanings. While *shashin* gradually came to refer to photography,⁶⁵ *shasei* had its own meaning in fine art and in literature. Art historian Satō Dōshin 佐藤道心 argues that the goal of artists who were

⁶³ Natsume Sōseki, “Shaseibun,” in vol. 11 of *Sōseki zenshū* (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1966), p. 21.

⁶⁴ Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 48.

⁶⁵ For more on this process, see Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*, esp. chap. 5, “*Shashin* in the Capital: The Last Stage of Metamorphosis.”

establishing the category of “fine art” in the Meiji period was “to unify the subject-object relationship by combining exterior truth with interior truth and objectivity with subjectivity...it may be more fitting to describe these terms [*shasei*, etc.] by qualifying them as ones that embody a certain ‘ambiguity’ that refuses absolute definitions.”⁶⁶ This combination of objectivity and subjectivity is a virtual restatement of Usui’s own description of *kikōbun* (which, as shown above, was to have *shasei* as one of its foundational elements).

Sōseki’s focus in his essay “Shaseibun” is on the objectivity that sets *shaseibun* composition apart from novel writing, but it nevertheless demonstrates the same kind of ambiguity identified by Satō. Sōseki describes the viewpoint of the *shaseibun* writer as that of an adult observing a child: “The parent and child are in different positions. If they were on the same level and were ruled by the same emotions, then every time the child cried, the parent would have to cry, too. This describes the normal novelist...the *shaseibun* writer depicts another’s crying without shedding a tear.”⁶⁷ He characterizes the ideal *shaseibun* writer as *kyakkanteki* 客觀的, or “objective,” saying that they should “not depict the self, but depict the other.”⁶⁸

At the same time, Sōseki begins the essay with the assertion that the “mental state of the author”⁶⁹ is the source of all the differences between *shaseibun* and conventional prose, and he allows for the author’s depiction of their own mental processes (with the caveat that they must maintain the same objective distance when describing themselves). Satō explains how “[d]epending on which aspect [objectivity or subjectivity] is emphasized, even when [artists] employ these terms [*shashin*, *shasei*, and *sha’i*] to articulate their ideas, the concepts appear to

⁶⁶ Satō Dōshin, *Meiji kokka to kindai bijutsu* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa kōbunkan, 1999), p. 217–218, cited in Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*, p.48.

⁶⁷ Sōseki, “Shaseibun,” in *Sōseki zenshū*, v. 11, p. 23.

⁶⁸ Sōseki, “Shaseibun,” in *Sōseki zenshū*, v. 11, p. 26.

⁶⁹ *sakusha no shinteki jōtai* 作者の心的状態. Sōseki, “Shaseibun,” in *Sōseki zenshū*, v. 11, p. 22.

signify completely opposite meanings...[T]he volition of the cognitive subjectivity of the picture maker or the audience is largely responsible for the ‘fluctuation.’”⁷⁰ So despite Sōseki’s focus on objectivity, his own construction of the *shaseibun* writer reveals the extent to which even dispassionate sketching is influenced by various subjectivities—the author must temper the influence of their own mental processes on the sketch, and the audience will be influenced by their personal expectations of objectivity and subjectivity in the artistic work.

The notion of objectivity (and the related subjectivity), referenced above in both Sōseki and Usui, was a distinctly modern one for Japanese thinkers. Several scholars have pointed out that the idea of objective truth would have been difficult to understand for Japanese in the Edo period, even for scholars of natural history. Timon Screech argues that visuality in Japan in the Edo period was “discursive and extrapolatory,” moving from object to object and recalling webs of associations, while the Western scientific gaze used sustained “close and objectifying observation” to dissect and select.⁷¹

Objectivity was strenuously held to be possible in Europe, and consequently also argued for by Rangaku (Western learnings) commentators, and yet in the Japanese context such a notion might carry rather little metaphysical ballast, and even seem quaint. The very sense of objectivity had few resonances in Japanese thought.⁷²

Fukuoka voices her own hesitancy about applying notions of objectivity:

I am equally wary of applying the notion of objectivity formulated and structured through Western scientific studies to the cases I examine in this book. Articulation of “subject” or “subjectivity” in the context of Tokugawa Japan requires thorough and careful consideration of writings in fields of intellectual, social, and religious history.⁷³

⁷⁰ Satō, *Meiji kokka to kindai bijutsu*, p. 217–218, cited in Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*, p.48.

⁷¹ Timon Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart: The Western Scientific Gaze and Popular Imagery in Late Edo Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2002), p. 2.

⁷² Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart*, p. 172.

⁷³ Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*, p. 213n77.

In his study of late Edo visual culture, Screech shows how the emphasis on precision in *rangaku* 蘭学 (Dutch studies) widely influenced popular culture, but he argues that the study of Western science itself was relatively marginal in intellectual fields.⁷⁴

In general, the production of knowledge in Edo Japan was of the “discursive and extrapolatory” style. Fukuoka shows how knowledge of natural specimens in *materia medica* practice was based as much on personal observation of the object as on the accretion of received knowledge from Chinese and Japanese sources and on discussions with other scholars at natural history exhibitions.⁷⁵ In his own study of the development of *honzōgaku* 本草学 (natural history) in the Edo period, Federico Marcon traces the way that the introduction of a more empirical approach to the study of nature in Japan contributed to the abstraction and commodification of natural objects.⁷⁶ But despite the increasing importance of observation and scientific and epistemological methods of data gathering, knowledge thus gained remained supplemental to knowledge received from classic *honzōgaku* texts.⁷⁷

While Marcon is careful to point out that it is not his intention to find an early modern precursor to the introduction of Western science in the Meiji period, he does claim that the idea of objectified nature existed in part because of the developments in Edo-period natural history, and that Western science was able to build on that existing idea.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, historian of science Murakami Yōichirō 村上陽一郎 sees Japan’s transition to a modern period (*kindai* 近代) as a clear break. Murakami argues that while in Taoist and Confucian philosophy, which formed Japan’s intellectual bedrock, “nature and humans are not opposed to one another as

⁷⁴ Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart*, p. 7.

⁷⁵ See Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*.

⁷⁶ Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

⁷⁷ Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, p. 197.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature*, pp. 296–97.

subject and object, but the human is understood within nature,” science emerged in Europe in part due to the influence of Christianity, which set humanity against and above nature.⁷⁹ If science as we know it could only develop in an environment with the specific cultural conditions of Enlightenment Europe, then significant changes would have to occur for science to be transplanted to Japan.⁸⁰

On one hand, Murakami says that “Japan’s attitude towards European scholarship, science, and technology took the form of hurriedly importing finished products,” without adapting their own fundamental culture at all.⁸¹ This was in fact part of a general trend, what David G. Wittner refers to as “*bunmei kaika* [文明開化, civilization and enlightenment] ideology.”⁸² In his study of the mechanization of the silk industry in Meiji Japan, Wittner shows that “choice of technique and technology transfer was more ideological than technical or economic...beliefs in ‘modernity’ and material representations of authority, progress, and ‘civilization’ were more important,” and the same could be said for fields such as science, and even literature.⁸³ By importing and implementing the latest ideas and technologies from the West, it was believed, Japan could present itself as a nation every bit as modern and advanced as its new global rivals.

On the other hand, Murakami does admit that Japan was able to import and make advances in science, despite science’s specificity to European culture. James R. Bartholomew agrees that before 1914 the general focus was on importing results from abroad rather than

⁷⁹ Murakami Yōichirō, *Nihonjin to kindai kagaku* 日本人と近代科学 (Tokyo: Shin’yōsha, 1980), p. 21.

⁸⁰ Murakami, *Nihonjin to kindai kagaku*, pp. 213–14.

⁸¹ Murakami, *Nihonjin to kindai kagaku*, p. 217. In Murakami’s view, this had severe consequences for Japan’s scientific culture that persist to the present: “Japan’s globally first rate scientific and technological accomplishments are as few as the stars in the dawn sky.” Ibid., p. 44.

⁸² David G. Wittner, “The Mechanization of Japan’s Silk Industry and the Quest for Progress and Civilization, 1870–1880,” in *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*, ed. Morris Low (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 139.

⁸³ Wittner, “The Mechanization of Japan’s Silk Industry,” p. 136.

supporting domestic research, but he repudiates Murakami's notion, common in internal criticisms of Japanese science, that Japan's scientific community was or is especially underdeveloped relative to global standards.⁸⁴ How to account for Japan's apparent scientific and technological successes despite the culturally specific factors Murakami points out as necessary for the original development of science in early modern Europe? Bartholomew argues that because science was at least in part an external commodity in the Edo and Meiji periods, the history of Japanese science should be one of institutions rather than properties.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, it is fruitful to consider the way that certain ideas fundamental to scientific practice emerged and developed in Japan during the early days of modern Japanese science.

Two ideas in particular are relevant to the present study: objectivity and subjectivity. The terms "subject" and "object," in the philosophical sense of the subject and object of observation or experience, were originally translated in the early Meiji period by Nishi Amane 西周 (1829–1897) as *shukan* 主観 (subject) and *kyakkan* 客観⁸⁶ (object). In 1884, they appear in *Tetsugaku ji'i* 哲学字彙 (Dictionary of philosophy) as translations of the English words "object" and "subject."⁸⁷ They were being used regularly in discussions of literature by the third decade of Meiji; Sōseki uses the term *kyakkan* repeatedly in the "Shaseibun" essay discussed above. And it has already been shown how Usui combined notions of subjectivity, related to the subject who experiences a natural landscape, and objectivity, the scientific facts that underlie and explain the existence of that landscape, to construct his conception of *kikōbun*.

⁸⁴ See Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan*.

⁸⁵ Bartholomew, *The Formation of Science in Japan*, p. 4.

⁸⁶ *Kyakkan* is the most common pronunciation today, but in the Meiji period the pronunciation was likely *kakkan*.

⁸⁷ Inoue Tetsujirō 井上哲次郎 and Ariga Nagao 有賀長雄, *Tetsugaku ji'i* (Tokyo: Tōyōkan, 1884), p. 83 and p. 120.

Authentic literature: A connection to the real

The importance of authenticity, in the sense of descriptions that have a demonstrable correspondence to objective reality, appears frequently in writing on *kikōbun* and other artistic depictions of landscape. Through his repeated insistence on using scientific knowledge to capture a place's unique "locality" emerges a belief in the ability of scientific knowledge to ensure the correspondence between a depiction of landscape, and the actual natural environment the creator experienced and based their depiction on.

Continuing the discussion of "gneiss" in "Kikōbun-ron" discussed above, Usui says that "from the banks of the Tenryū River to the Kiso region, most of the imposing landscapes of the Japan's interior are composed of this rock."⁸⁸ The specific kind of rock is important because it is representative of a certain region, and referencing this fact is the best way of evoking "unique local scenery," which Kumagai identifies as one of the defining motivations for Usui's *kikōbun* theory.⁸⁹ This is important: the specificity of the rock type helps tie the literary description of the landscape back to the real-world scene.

This extra layer of real-world correspondence is necessary because the artistic depiction does *not* need to be precisely equivalent to the place in reality—in fact, Usui argues, this is not even possible. Reflecting on nature and art in "Nihon Arupusu no nanhan," Usui asserts that depicting things *ari no mama* ありのまま (as things are) is not possible "because that which is unique does not permit another *ari no mama* existence outside of itself," positing that instead "we should rename *ari no mama* as *mitaru mama* 見たるまま [as things are seen]."⁹⁰ The artist can never really truly recreate the mountain on the page; nor should they want to, as "nature is an

⁸⁸ "Kikōbun-ron," in KUZS, v. 5, p. 387.

⁸⁹ "sono tochi tokuyū no keishō" その土地特有の景象. Kumagai, "Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun," p. 47.

⁹⁰ "Nihon Arupusu no nanhan," in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 56–57.

essence unchangeable by human hands...it only becomes meaningful ‘nature’ through its contact with the inner life⁹¹ of humans”—in other words, the natural environment only becomes meaningful to humans when they encounter it, distill it through their subjective perspective and assign it the signifier “nature,” and this process should be privileged in artistic production.⁹²

This position echoes that expressed by John Ruskin (1819–1900)⁹³ in *Modern Painters Volume IV*, where he argues that “great art must be inventive...its subject must be produced by the imagination...great landscape art cannot be a mere copy of any given scene.”⁹⁴ Ruskin’s “inventive” art, in contrast to “topographical,” gives the viewer “the impression which the reality would have produced,” but does so by means of the artist’s selection of details to include or exclude.⁹⁵ Ultimately, “the aim of the great inventive landscape painter must be to give the far higher and deeper truth of mental vision.”⁹⁶

The goal of landscape art, then, is not topographical equivalency, but a kind of artistic, impressionistic truth. The artist modifies their initial impression of the place “into something which is not so much the image of the place itself, as the spirit of the place,” while simultaneously “check[ing] these finer thoughts by mathematical accuracies, so as materially to impair the imaginative faculty,” ensuring the modifications do not go too far.⁹⁷ Or, as Usui puts it, “without sufficient knowledge, it is doubtful whether true perception can take place...your impressions will be influenced by your preconceptions and imagination.”⁹⁸ Even if a depiction

⁹¹ The term is rendered *naimen seimei* 内面生命, with the phonetic transliteration *innaa-raifu* インナア・ライフ (inner life) rendered above the *kanji* characters.

⁹² “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 57.

⁹³ Ruskin’s influence on Usui has been well documented by Kumagai, Kondō, and others, though perhaps, as I have argued in the previous chapter, overstated.

⁹⁴ John Ruskin, *Modern Painters Volume IV*, vol. 6 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–2010), p. 27.

⁹⁵ Ruskin, *Modern Painters Volume IV*, p. 35.

⁹⁶ Ruskin, *Modern Painters Volume IV*, p. 35.

⁹⁷ Ruskin, *Modern Painters Volume IV*, p. 36.

⁹⁸ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 382.

differs in certain details from the real place, artists' scientific knowledge about the specific locale ensures that their depiction is nevertheless an authentic and true representation of a particular natural location.

The authority of science

Of course, for science to provide this authenticating function for literature, it had to be assumed to have some level of authority in regard to the perception of reality. This level of authority was already present in notions of Western science and rational, detailed observation and representation in the Edo period, and it was reinforced when science was established as a discrete practice during the Meiji period.

In *The Premise of Fidelity*, Fukuoka shows how *shashin* representations of natural specimens were predicated on notions of the authority of first-hand observation and the accurate recording of the fine details of the original object. While Fukuoka's subject was *materia medica*, not, strictly speaking, science in the sense of the modern practice of experimentation and quantification, the importance of personal experience and rational observation of the details of the specimen are suggestive of the same way of valuing the connection between reality and representation. In other words, *shashin* pictures of natural objects were seen as accurate in part because the practices of observation and recording that produced them were authoritative enough to authenticate their relation to the object in reality.

Similarly, Screech shows in *The Lens Within the Heart* how *Ran* 蘭⁹⁹ acquired the authority to verify the accuracy of visual representations in the Edo period. Precision was a

⁹⁹ The Chinese character used in Japan to represent the Netherlands; the related *rangaku* 蘭学 referred to the study of knowledge from Europe, especially science and technology, so-named because the bulk of it was imported by the

defining characteristic of *Ran*, and was extended from science to art, as a technique of transmitting exact reality based on observation.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the tools of science were seen as necessary for checking the exactness of transmission, and observations (scientific, and by extension artistic) were not final unless they were confirmed by set measurements and devices.¹⁰¹ For popular images influenced by the Dutch studies-based scientific gaze, as well as for the *shashin* images of natural history scholars, scientific processes were closely linked to the belief in correspondence between visual imagery and the real objects on which they were based.

Interestingly, while Fukuoka's study suggests that the scientific processes behind *shashin* imagery were linked with natural history, and by extension fields such as botany and medicine, Screech argues that the scientific objects and processes of Dutch studies were primarily used in contexts of popular consumption, and that their reach to other areas of Edo culture were limited.¹⁰² This changed rapidly in the Meiji period, however, as science was institutionalized and used to back government policy.

The authority of science is a recurring theme in Morris Low's edited volume, *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*. For example, in Christian Oberländer's investigation of the adoption of "scientific medicine" to combat the threat of beriberi disease in early Meiji Japan, it becomes clear that Western style science was not merely seen as part of the superficial trappings of modernization, but was integral to the formation of public health and military policy, as the government established research hospitals and based military and civilian health policies on the results of scientific research into the

Dutch via their trading post at Dejima 出島. Screech uses the term *ran* as a signifier to represent Edo-period conceptions of the West, especially related to visuality, technology, and science.

¹⁰⁰ Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart*, p. 52.

¹⁰¹ Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart*, p. 48.

¹⁰² Screech, *The Lens Within the Heart*, p. 10.

disease.¹⁰³ In another chapter in the volume, Sabine Frühstück argues that prominent sexological theorist Habuto Eiji (1878–1929) “attributed a certain power” to scientific knowledge, and that “in Habuto’s and many of his contemporaries’ minds, the exercise of political power was to be informed by scientific knowledge.”¹⁰⁴

By the time Usui and the other writers I have surveyed were writing towards the end of the Meiji period, science already had an established history of authority both in public entertainment and the arts, and in official policy making. Given the premium placed in many Meiji literary circles on the “authenticity” of literary texts—whether that meant an objective, rational adherence to the facts of an observed scene, or a verifiable one-to-one correspondence between an author’s life and the experiences of their protagonist—it is no wonder that Usui sought for his own proposed literary genre an authoritative source of authentication, and that he deployed scientific knowledge for that task.

Through his application of notions of science and scientific knowledge to his literary theory, and his simultaneous promotion of popular interest in science among his broader readership, Kojima Usui becomes not only a case study in the literary issue of genre formation in the Meiji literary world, but a window into the early development and popular reception of modern science in Japan. Whether or not Usui’s conceptions of science were representative or instrumental in establishing popular views, his rhetorical uses of ideas like “scientist” and “scientific knowledge” are compelling examples of the ways that literature and science, as culturally constructed categories, were constitutive of each other. By both mobilizing science

¹⁰³ Christian Oberländer, “The Rise of Western ‘scientific medicine’ in Japan: Bacteriology and Beriberi,” in *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*, ed. Morris Low (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 13–36.

¹⁰⁴ Sabine Frühstück, “Male Anxieties: Nerve Force, Nation, and the Power of Sexual Knowledge,” in *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*, ed. Morris Low (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 39.

towards his literary ends and mobilizing his literature to advance scientific ends, Usui became an active participant in the discursive construction of Meiji “science” as well as literature.

Chapter Three: “Visions of Nature: Scientific Gaze, Artistic Sense, and the Landscape of Modern Japan”

If you want to see the perfection of harmonious natural beauty, stand in the valley of Kamikōchi and bathe in the setting sun as it lights up Mount Hotaka and the lakes of the Azusa River. Divine crimson and gold shine down from the heavens and reflect off Mount Hotaka. The sun has already abandoned the valley, and the lower slopes of the mountain are pocked with darkness like that of predawn. Yet on the braided leather-like ridge of hard stone stretching from Mount Hotaka to Mount Dakegawa, the light begins to burn as bright and fierce as the midday sun. This brilliance eventually passes into a dreamlike haze, creeping away like the flicker of a dying candle, and then it is gone. How beautiful, this alpenglow!

The effect is opposite in the morning. At dusk the sunlight climbs from bottom to top, finally leaving the entire mountain in darkness; but in the morning the sun’s rays begin by coloring Mount Hotaka’s crown, proceeding down to the base of the mountain and leaving all illuminated. The snow-marked peak reflects upside-down in the lake, and it looks as if the lake floor is covered in white lilies in full bloom. This is the essence of stillness, the epitome of tranquility, the height of majesty.

—Kojima Usui, “Nihon Arupusu to mannen’yuki” 日本アルプスと万年雪

Kojima Usui gave the opening remarks for the Japanese Alpine Club’s (*Nihon Sangakukai* 日本山岳会; hereafter JAC) first general body meeting in 1908. Usui spoke on English painter and critic John Ruskin (1819–1900), in which he summarized the man’s life and major works, and discussed his significance to both western and Japanese art and thought.¹ In the speech, Usui argued that without Ruskin modern art would not have developed the way it did, and we would not look at nature the way we do now. He prefaced his remarks with an apology for rehashing information about Ruskin, with whom he assumes most of his listeners are familiar. By presenting Ruskin to his fellow Meiji mountaineers not only as an influential art critic, but also as a primary motivating force behind the modern appreciation of nature and especially

¹ This speech was given in a different version at the 1908 gathering of the Yokohama Literature Club (*Yokohama bungaku dōkōkai*), and was published as an article in the watercolor painting periodical *Mizue* in 1909 and as a chapter in *Nihon Alps Volume I* in 1910.

mountains, Usui paints Ruskin as a virtual founder of the activity being celebrated at the JAC assembly.

While Ruskin was an accomplished climber, his ascents in the European Alps were not groundbreaking.² In Meiji-period (1868–1912) Japan, he was primarily known for his painting and art criticism. Ruskin’s preeminence in discussions of mountain climbing, mountain writing, and even more mainstream literature suggests the deep influence the visual arts had on these areas. The visual arts, especially sketching and water color painting, had a significant relationship with early mountain literature in Japan. The relationship was both visual and narrative: photographs, paintings, and sketches from both professionals and amateurs added to the reader’s experience of Usui’s literary publications and the Japanese Alpine Club’s journal *Sangaku* 山岳 (Mountains), while painters began writing *shasei kikōbun* 写生紀行文 (sketching travelogues), recounting the trips they took in search of materials for their sketches and paintings. The relationship was also both personal and professional. Ibaragi Inokichi 茨木猪之吉 (1888–1944) drew amusing caricatures of Usui and other club members, and Usui wrote touching memorials for Ōshita Tōjirō 大下藤次郎 (1870–1911) upon his untimely death. Usui also filled in as an interim editor for Ōshita’s watercolor journal *Mizue* みずゑ after his death, and he offered his support as a consultant during the establishment of the Japanese Alpine Drawing Society (*Nihon sangaku-ga kyōkai* 日本山岳画協会). Moreover, sketches had practical value: at a time when detailed maps of the deeper mountains were all but nonexistent, the climbers had to draw their own; and hand-drawn sketches (as well as photographs) of mountain

² Ann C. Colley shows that despite the tendency of previous biographies to downplay or ignore Ruskin’s climbing activities, he was in fact an avid climber. See Ann C. Colley, “John Ruskin: Climbing and the Vulnerable Eye,” *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, no. 1 (2009): 43–66.

peaks and alpine flora and fauna aided in identification and provided visual evidence in essays discussing current debates about the geography of the Japanese interior.

Whether the purpose was cartographic, scientific, or artistic, the various modes of depicting Japan's mountains in publications by Usui and other climbers relied on notions of accuracy—if a map or a sketch of a botanical specimen were inaccurate, it would be unsuited to its fundamental purpose of relaying information about the natural world, while the importance of accuracy in literary art has been discussed in the previous chapter. This notion of accuracy was determined by what Timon Screech calls the “scientific gaze,”³ a view of the world that is “sustained” and “dissects” and “selects,” and which Screech argues had a far-reaching influence on popular visual culture in the late Edo period (1603–1868). In this chapter, I will follow a similar tack: I will consider the relationship between science and scientific knowledge, and the visuality of literature,⁴ especially in the genre of *sangaku bungaku*.

On one hand, I will consider the following questions: What was the value of scientific language and rationality for intellectuals who were trying to develop a *literary* language? Was there, indeed, a clear-cut distinction between the two? How did an author's scientific knowledge affect their literary writing? These issues are corollaries of the questions raised in the previous chapter: I will continue to consider the role of science in Usui's literature, but in this case, I will shift my focus from Usui's critical writings on literature to how his theory played out in practice. My goal will be to determine how background knowledge of scientific facts about nature influenced the visual and imagistic qualities of literary depictions of nature. Given that the

³ Though Screech in fact specifies the Western scientific gaze, science was well-enough established domestically by the end of the Meiji period that I believe we can do away with the qualifier “Western.”

⁴ When I use the term visuality, I refer to the idea of a textual description representing a visual scene. Thus the visuality of a piece of travel literature refers to the qualities—both textual and extra-textual, i.e. photographs, illustrations, etc.—that contribute to the sense that a real scene that the author experienced, and that the reader might envision as they read, is being conveyed through the verbal text.

juxtaposition of science and literature was not uncommon in late-Meiji journals—in youth-oriented magazines, for example—my discussion of the case of Usui and *Sangaku* will be relevant for a broader understanding of Meiji-period literary publishing.

At the same time, the visual quality of mountain literature went beyond its prose descriptions: *sangaku bungaku* texts were invariably supplemented by maps, sketches, paintings, and photographs, and these all played a complementary role in creating the total effect of a tale of mountain travel. Looking at both *Sangaku* and Usui's *Nihon Arupusu* 日本アルプス (The Japanese Alps) series—which Kondō Nobuyuki suggests was a groundbreaking work in the history of book publishing in Japan from the point of view of design and contents⁵—I will consider how visual and textual elements of these publications work in concert to produce their overall visual effect. If “[t]he duty of *kikōbun* is to help readers know, feel, and experience things they have never seen before,” how was this achieved in the text, and in the inter-textual inclusion of visual representations of mountain scenery and topography such as sketches and maps?⁶

Kojima Usui's attempts to create literary-visual representations of alpine nature, along with his broader activities in the spread of mountain climbing as a leisure activity in Japan, were part of a larger development in Meiji Japan—what Karatani Kōjin 柄谷行人 has called the “discovery of landscape.”⁷ Karatani discusses this “discovery” in the context of Meiji-period literature, suggesting that it entailed configuring a new sense of landscapes as exterior space, from which the individual could separate in order to turn inward and consider his or her own

⁵ Kondō Nobuyuki, “Kaidai” 解題, in vol. 6 of *Kojima Usui zenshū* 小島烏水全集 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1979) [hereafter KUZS], p. 529.

⁶ *Kikōbun no ninmu wa, minai mono ni, shirase, kanjisase, ajiwaseyou to suru no de aru*. 紀行文の任務は、見ないものに、知らせ、感じさせ、味はせやうとするのである。 Kojima Usui, “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZS, v. 5, p. 385.

⁷ *Fūkei no hakken* 風景の発見. One of a number of “discoveries” explored in Karatani Kōjin, *Nihon kindai bungaku no kigen: genpon* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 2009).

subjectivity. Despite his curious, unexplained assertion that “[t]he Alpinist was a virtual creation of literature,” Karatani focuses on canonical authors such as Kunikida Doppo 国木田独歩 (1871–1908), and does not consider what role alpinists or other traveler-writers may have had in the construction of Japan’s landscape.⁸ Kären Wigen and Fujioka Nobuko have framed Usui’s literary and alpine activities in these terms, discussing “geographical enlightenment” and the “literary landscape of the Japanese Alps” respectively;⁹ in this chapter, I will build on these scholars’ work by showing how the specific visual techniques Usui used in his mountain writing contributed to the reification of Japan’s alpine landscapes.

While Usui’s literary mountains did contribute to the creation of the Japanese Alps as a “landscape”—that is, a natural space that has been objectified, abstracted, or framed for human consumption—I will argue that Usui’s treatment of alpine landscapes allows for a more nuanced understanding of the process of landscape discovery in the Meiji period. Usui’s mountain *kikōbun* 紀行文 (travel writing) narratives situate the mountaineer Usui as narrating subject and the landscape he traverses as the object of description. In these travel narratives, the narrator is not uncritical of his privileged position as the viewing subject, and at times shows a distinct awareness of his position relative to his environment. Nature is not merely presented as a thematic space for considering questions of personal subjectivity; it is given vitality through the narrator’s vivid descriptions, and the narrative structure of Usui’s *kikōbun* and the rhetorical position the narrator takes relative to the landscapes he describes serve to highlight a deeper complexity to the relationship between the human subject and the environment.

⁸ Karatani Kōjin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), p. 29.

⁹ See Fujioka Nobuko, “Vision or Creation? Kojima Usui and the Literary Landscape of the Japanese Alps,” *Comparative Literature Studies* 39, no. 4 (2002), pp. 282–292; and Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 2005): pp. 1–26.

I will begin my examination of Kojima Usui and the visual arts by providing an overview of the various connections between Usui, *sangaku bungaku*, and the visual arts, from the interpersonal networks of artists and mountaineers to the critiques of artists and artistic theory that Usui made in his writings. This will both suggest the ways in which numerous artistic theories and practices influenced Usui's literary theory and practice, and reveal the specific ways Usui constructed notions of nature depiction in visual art and how he applied these notions to his writing.

I will then analyze the texts of *sangaku bungaku* for the specific textual features that mark the visual qualities of the texts. I will examine primarily the four-volume series of books Usui published between 1910 to 1915, entitled *Nihon Arupusu*. All of these publications include both travel narratives and essays, so they provide material for considering both the role of scientific knowledge in literary writing, and the influence of literary techniques on scientific writing.¹⁰ In connection with this second question, I will also look at the articles published by practicing scientists in the pages of the Japanese Alpine Club's journal, *Sangaku*. Insofar as pictorial elements—photographs, sketches, prints of watercolor paintings—were an integral part of Usui's mountain writing, I will also consider how this material complemented and contributed to the text.

Finally, I will connect the visuality of Usui's *sangaku bungaku* to the larger question of landscape in the Meiji period. Usui's writings on alpine landscapes, and his promotion of leisure activities in Japan's mountains, established a place for the mountains of Japan's interior on the mental map of modern Japan and in the nation's collective identity that was being constructed

¹⁰ Though Usui was not a trained scientist and did not claim any scientific specialization, he frequently wrote in great detail about contemporary scientific debates concerning the mountains; several such essays appear in the volumes of *Nihon Arupusu*.

during the Meiji period, marking his work as a novel contribution to the modern conception of landscape and environment in Japan.

Sangaku bungaku and the visual arts

Though Kojima Usui produced no visual art himself, he was an important figure in the history of Meiji art. He was an accomplished art collector, amassing a collection of almost 900 woodblock prints, from Japanese *ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 (pictures of the floating world) by Utagawa Hiroshige 歌川 広重 (1797–1858), Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760–1849), and Utagawa Kuniyoshi 歌川 国芳 (1778–1861), to the first prints in Japan by Albrecht Dürer and Pablo Ruiz Picasso (1881–1973).¹¹ He also wrote occasional reviews of exhibitions of Japanese art, especially focusing on paintings related to the mountains, and he published several book-length studies of *ukiyo-e*, making him one of the first critics to study the genre as works of art.¹² In a review of the Yokohama Museum of Art exhibition of his collection, Lucy Birmingham calls him “one of Japan’s great art collectors,” who “has left an indelible imprint on the history of art in Japan.”¹³

After a preface and a short piece on the definition of the term “Alps” and “Japanese Alps,” the first significant section of Kojima Usui’s *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan* 日本アルプス第一巻 (The Japanese Alps, Volume 1, 1910) is “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu” 自然描写の芸術 (The art of nature depiction), an extensive reflection on the depiction of nature in art, where he

¹¹ His collection is currently housed in the Yokohama Museum of Art. An exhibition of roughly 250 works from the collection was held in 2007, entitled *Kojima Usui hanga korekushon ten: yama to bungaku, soshite bijutsu* 小島烏水版画コレクション 山と文学 そして美術 (“World of Kojima Usui Collection”). For more on the collection, see Yokohama Museum of Art, *Kojima Usui hanga korekushon ten: yama to bungaku, soshite bijutsu = World of Kojima Usui Collection* (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 2007).

¹² For more on Usui’s interest in and research on *ukiyo-e*, see the discussion beginning on p. 339 of Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*.

¹³ Lucy Birmingham Fujii, “World of Kojima Usui Collection,” *Metropolis* 673 (February 2017), http://lucybirmingham.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/2007_02_16_02.jpg.

discusses first literature and then painting. In his discussion of visual art, which comprises nearly half of the essay, Usui discusses both European and Japanese landscape painters, focusing on the role of mountains in landscape painting and lamenting the significant lack of accomplished mountain painters.¹⁴ Towards the end of the piece, he mentions several contemporary Japanese artists who have finally begun to create Japanese mountain paintings worthy of the name: Ōshita Tōjirō, Ibaragi Inokichi, Maruyama Banka 丸山晚霞 (1867–1942), and Yoshida Hiroshi 吉田博 (1876–1950). Discussing Ōshita’s, Ibaragi’s, and Maruyama’s pieces from the inaugural Bunten (*Monbushō bijutsu tenrankai* 文部省美術展覧会, Ministry of Education fine art exhibition) in 1907, and Yoshida’s from the 1908 exhibition, Usui disagrees with many of the criticisms that were levelled at them in reviews, but provides some of his own—ultimately, he views them as effective at recalling the scenery, but not particularly inspiring. Nevertheless, he singles out these artists for praise as Japan’s first authentic mountain painters: they based their painting on their own experiences going to the mountains to collect their material, and their works reflected this.¹⁵ The artists Usui names here were among many who made significant contributions to the burgeoning field of mountain climbing and mountain-related art.

Climbing and sketching: Painters and Meiji alpinism

Kumagai Akihiro 熊谷昭宏 discusses this practice of artists traveling to the mountains for their artistic endeavors, referred to as *shasei ryokō* 写生旅行 (traveling for sketching). According to Kumagai, “this kind of short trip came into fashion in the world of painting in the Meiji 30s

¹⁴ He identifies Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899), Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), and J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) as a few of the only true mountain painters in European landscape painting. “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 152. In the Japanese case, he mentions the profusion of depictions of Mount Fuji, but does not discuss any specific artists.

¹⁵ “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu,” in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 161–64.

[1897–1907], and artists of Western-style painting in particular traveled actively.”¹⁶ Kumagai lists representative artists who engaged in such excursions and published the related *shasei kikō* 写生紀行 (sketching travelogue), including Ōshita Tōjirō, Maruyama Banka, and Kosugi Misei 小杉未醒 (also known as Hōan 放菴, 1881–1964), all of whom were involved with the activities of the Alpine Club in one way or another.¹⁷ Misei, for example, provided illustrations for a piece published by his climbing partner and painting teacher Ioki Bunsai 五百城文哉 (1863–1906) in the first issue of *Sangaku*,¹⁸ and he designed the frontispiece for the 1907 issues of *Sangaku*.

It is worth noting a parallel between the association between travel and painting for these artists, and the relationship of scientific knowledge to literature for Kojima Usui. As shown in the previous chapter, Usui saw scientific knowledge as a way of enhancing the authenticity of his literary descriptions of nature. In the same way, Kumagai argues that travel actually became part of the ethic of sketching in the context of Western-style painting—sketch artists had to physically see something and sketch it in person in order to guarantee the authenticity, and consequently the value, of their painting.¹⁹ Similarly, just as Usui used details of a place—*sono tochi tokuyū no keishō* その土地特有の景象 (unique local scenery)—to ground his descriptions in real-world locales experience first-hand, the travelers and writers of *shasei ryokō* expounded the importance of “local color” (*chihōshoku* 地方色, or *rōkaru karā* ローカル・カラー):

“*Kikōbun* guaranteed that the ethics of ‘sketching’ were being upheld...it performed the role of depicting the elements of ‘local color’ that couldn’t be fully expressed in the visual sketch.”²⁰ In

¹⁶ Kumagai Akihiro, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no ‘shinpo’ to janru no jiritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni” 明治後期における紀行文の「進歩」とジャンルの自立性—小島烏水の理論と実践を中心に (PhD dissertation, Dōshisha University, 2014), p. 94.

¹⁷ Kumagai, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun,” p. 94.

¹⁸ See Ioki Bunsai, “Akanagi no ikkaku” 赤薙の一角, *Sangaku* 1, no. 1 (1906): pp. 115–119.

¹⁹ Kumagai, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun,” p. 100.

²⁰ Kumagai, “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun,” p. 106.

other words, these painters, traveling to paint and write about their experiences, were engaging in many of the same discourses around authenticity in artistic depictions of natural scenery as were Usui and other established *sangaku bungaku* writers, not to mention other contemporary leading literary figures.²¹

Ōshita Tōjirō was one of the leading figures in the development of Japanese landscape painting in the modern, realist mode. As Nishida Masanori 西田正憲 points out, Ōshita was among “the Japanese artists who were trying to capture scenes of mountains and wilderness...[who] gave birth to a new way of looking at natural landscape.”²² While he began his training in oil painting, his primary medium was watercolor.²³ He was a leading figure in the watercolor painting world: he established the monthly watercolor periodical *Mizue* in 1905; published *Suisaiga no shiori* 水彩画の栞 (A guide to watercolor painting) in 1901 and a revised version, *Suisaiga kaitei* 水彩画階梯 (Guidebook for watercolor painting), in 1904; and he and Maruyama Banka together founded the *Suisaiga kōshūjo* 水彩画講習所 (Watercolor training center; later known as the *Nihon suisaigakai kenkyūjo* 水彩画会研究所, Japan watercolor association institute) in 1906.

Ōshita was also closely involved with Kojima Usui and modern mountaineering activities. Even before he became involved with the sport as it was being developed in the

²¹ Indeed, the insistence on a strong connection between the author’s lived experience and their literary narrative was at the heart of the Japanese Naturalist (*shizen shugi* 自然主義) literature that was at the forefront of literary production at the time.

²² Nishida Masanori, “Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen ‘hakken’—Arufureddo Paasonzu to Ōshita Tōjirō” 風景画家による日本の自然「発見」—アルフレッド・パーソンズと大下藤次郎—, in *Tabi to Nihon hakken: Idō to kōtsū no bunka keiseiryoku: Kokusai Nihon bunka kenkyū sentaa kyōdō kenkyū hōkokusho* 旅と日本発見：移動と交通の文化形成力：国際日本文化研究センター共同研究報告書, ed. Shirahata Yōzaburō 白幡洋三郎 (Kyoto: Ningen bunka kenkyū kikō kokusai Nihon bunka kenkyū sentaa 人間文化研究機構国際日本文化研究センター, 2009), p. 244.

²³ Indeed, watercolor was the medium of choice for many of the Japanese mountain painters already mentioned above. In general, the Meiji 30s saw a boom in interest in watercolor painting.

Japanese Alpine Club (JAC), Ōshita traveled for his sketching excursions to the lower elevation mountain ranges in the immediate vicinity of Tokyo, visiting Okutama 奥多摩, Hannō 飯能, Chichibu 秩父, and Nikkō 日光. Usui praised the inaugural issue of *Mizue* and offered his help in the establishment of the *Suisaiga kōshūjo*.²⁴ Usui remained a strong supporter of *Mizue*, frequently publishing pieces in the magazine, leading the efforts to keep the magazine running after Ōshita's death in 1911, and even taking over editorship for a short time in 1912.²⁵ For his part, Ōshita joined the JAC in 1907, designed the cover for the 1908 issues of *Sangaku*, and submitted prints and articles for publication in the JAC's journal. Following their first meeting during negotiations for the establishment of the *Suisaiga kōshūjo*, "the two were united by a strong, lifelong friendship."²⁶

The case of Ōshita suggests the deep ties between painting, especially watercolor painting, and Usui and Meiji alpinism in general. Other important Meiji artists, including Ibaragi, Maruyama, and Nakamura Seitarō²⁷ had equally close ties with the JAC and with Usui specifically. In the next section, I will explore the importance of visual art in Usui's approach to literary art.

Painting with words: Visuality in Usui's literary theory

Kojima Usui's interest in the applicability of scientific knowledge to literary composition has been noted by scholars and historians of literature from his contemporaries to the present, and I

²⁴ Nishida, "Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen 'hakken,'" p. 245.

²⁵ Kondō Nobuyuki, *Kojima Usui ge: yama no fūryū shisha den* 小島烏水 下山の風流使者伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2014), pp. 305–6.

²⁶ Nishida, "Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen 'hakken,'" p. 245.

²⁷ 中村清太郎 (1888–1967). Nakamura was an author of mountain literature, an artist, and the founder of the *Nihon sangakuga kyōkai* 日本山岳画協会 (Japanese association of alpine art, est. 1936). He accompanied Usui on the Shirane range trip under discussion, and the two were close friends.

have analyzed this aspect of his work extensively in the previous chapter. Yet despite frequent references to the profound influence of John Ruskin's art criticism, very little has been written about the role that visual art techniques and theories played in Usui's writing.

In fact, as mentioned above, Usui wrote extensively about painting, and he referenced painting, drawing, and photography frequently in his critical writings on literature. One of Usui's central goals in his development of *kikōbun* and *sangaku bungaku* was finding the most effective tools for the narrative depiction of visual scenes encountered while traveling in the mountains. Whether he was contrasting their relative merits or adapting from one medium to another, the visual arts were central to Usui's literary theories and conceptions.

When Usui referenced photography in his writing, it was usually as a foil for literature, an example of what literature could accomplish that photography could not. In "Kikōbun ni tsukite" 紀行文に就きて (On *kikōbun*, 1905), for example, in his discussion of the role of sketching in travel writing, he contends that "the photographer can only exercise their own design to a certain extent," while the literary sketcher "can depict complexity or simplicity as they desire."²⁸ The writer is thus better equipped to depict "change and movement," which were for Usui the very characteristics that gave nature its vitality, and were thus fundamental for the artistic depiction of natural scenes.

In general, Usui's rhetorical use of the photographic medium was as an example of a purely objective approach to nature. Comparing and contrasting the approach to nature taken by scientists and artists in "Nihon Arupusu no nanhan" 日本アルプスの南半 (The southern Japanese Alps, 1907), Usui distills the difference between the two down to the relative importance of objectivity and subjectivity. While artists such as landscape painters and *kikōbun*

²⁸ "Kikōbun ni tsukite," in KUZS, v. 4, p. 480.

writers are specifically interested in nature, they “confront nature without discarding the solemnity of the individual,” and the end product is nature filtered through the human subject.²⁹ This stands in contrast to scientists, for whom “reason alone remains...they almost entirely lose their individuality,” privileging the object itself without the influence of subjective selection or interpretation.³⁰ Regarding depictions of natural scenery, Usui suggests that because of the necessary human element in any artistic rendering, if one wants to depict nature for the sake of nature, “‘ego’ and ‘individuality’ are not needed, and using a camera to turn it into a photograph would last longer without any fuss.”³¹

Setting aside Usui’s failure to admit the subjective decisions of framing, lighting, and even basic choice of photographic subject, we see a clear distinction between photography, which is characterized as objective, scientific, even sterile; and painting and literary sketching, which involve subjective interpretation of nature and can depict the vital movements of nature: “Even given the same subject, paintings by Miyake Kokki and Maruyama Banka are distinguishable at a glance; but it must be more difficult to differentiate a photograph taken by Ogawa Kazumasa 小川一真 [1860–1929] and one taken by Mitsumura Toshimo 光村利藻 [1877–1955], because the former are created by a particular individual, while the latter are a reproduction of an identical material object.”³² A photograph merely reflects the details of a natural scene, while a painting or sketch gives the natural subject meaning.³³

²⁹ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 57.

³⁰ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 57.

³¹ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 58.

³² “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 58.

³³ This assertion raises two questions: Is it possible to replicate nature using scientific data, a photograph, or an artistic depiction; and, does the natural subject have meaning without the presence of an interpreting human subject? Simply put, Usui’s answers to these two questions are “no”; I will discuss his consideration of these questions in more detail below.

Photographs did have their uses, of course. While Usui saw literature and painting as superior for providing artistic, interpretive depictions of natural landscape, “for minute details of form and color” photography was the clear winner.³⁴ For this reason, Usui advocated for the use of photographs in studying natural sciences such as geology and geography, as opposed to sketches or other hand-drawn renditions of landscapes.³⁵

In fact, Usui’s categorization of photography as scientific and educational, and literary and visual landscape sketching as aesthetic, is reflective of a larger trend noted by Maki Fukuoka. Fukuoka distinguishes theoretical approaches to the new medium of photography in Europe and Japan. In “European debates on photography...questions about the new technology emerged from traditional Western pictorial conventions and were debated through the concepts and rhetoric of that discourse,” specifically “the language of aesthetic evaluation drawn from two-dimensional art.”³⁶ In Meiji Japan, on the other hand, “photography was grasped through the term *shashin* within an institutional educational context,” and photographs were valued not for their aesthetic qualities so much as for their ability to “[shorten] the temporal and spatial distance between oneself and the past...or distant regions.”³⁷ For Usui, photography played an important role in learning about mountains and their landscapes (as suggested by their frequent appearance in his publications and in *Sangaku*); but he tended to dismiss their utility regarding application or adaptation to literary techniques of landscape depiction.³⁸

³⁴ “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu” 自然描写の芸術, in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 158-59.

³⁵ See “Sangaku chiri kenkyū” 山岳地理研究, in KUZS, v. 7, p. 433.

³⁶ Maki Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity: Science, Visuality, and Representing the Real in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 187.

³⁷ Fukuoka, *The Premise of Fidelity*, p. 188.

³⁸ Usui’s stance on photography vis-à-vis literary applications is somewhat idiosyncratic; it seems likely that many of his contemporaries would have been intrigued by the possibilities of applying theories of photographic realism to literary art, especially in regards to *shasei* sketching. This suggests an intriguing avenue for further investigation.

Painting, on the other hand, was ignored by writers at their peril. First, sketching and painting differed from photography in their focus and effect on the object of depiction. Discussing the use of sketching for keeping records of mountaineering ascents, Usui actually recommended drawing over photography in some cases: while photography was indiscriminate in recording all of the details of a scene, a sketch could be adjusted to ignore minute details and focus on the elements deemed important enough to record for later reference.³⁹ In more aesthetic terms, Usui argued that photographs “only capture nature’s bare skeleton, while paintings capture form and vitality,” another restatement of the ability of subjective arts to find something deeper and more essential in a natural scene.⁴⁰

As we have seen elsewhere, Usui was not always consistent in his discussion of the merits of painting techniques for writers of *kikōbun*—though, as before, this was arguably a rhetorical strategy used to rationalize *kikōbun* as a legitimate medium for natural landscape depiction. In “Kikōbun ni tsukite,” Usui is sanguine about the possibilities that painting techniques adopted to literary narratives offer for revitalizing the medium of *kikōbun*. Discussing prior approaches to *kikōbun* such as *haibun* 俳文 (haiku-like prose style), *wabun* 和文 (prose style usually written in the phonetic script, using primarily Japanese-origin words), and *kanbun* 漢文 (classical Chinese-style prose), he finds a lack of precedent for depicting natural scenery in *kikōbun* landscape sketching. His primary complaint with these kinds of texts is their reliance on poetic convention and literary allusion, to the exclusion of any real attempt to describe a scene as actually viewed.

³⁹ “Tozan junbi-ron” 登山準備論, in KUZS, v. 5, p. 152.

⁴⁰ And, of course, another example of Usui’s unwillingness to admit, or perhaps a lack of awareness of, the very subjective nature of photography. “Shinshū to fūkeiga” 信州と風景画, in KUZS, v. 7, p. 174.

Insofar as the Japanese literary tradition provides no precedent for landscape description, Usui proposes adopting concepts from the visual arts in order to bolster the art of sketching in *kikōbun*. He is particularly intrigued by ideas surrounding the use of colors and lines, and how they could be arranged to create a harmonious composition. Analyzing a passage from Saitō Setsudō's (1797–1865) “Kisogawa o kudarū ki” 下岐蘇川記 (Going down the Kiso River, 1837), Usui says of *kanbun* travel writers in general that their “troubling over each word borders on an obsession with daubing bits of colors and drawing lines here and there; they don't appear to give any thought to how those lines connect, how the colors harmonize with the lines, and how they come to embody the landscape.”⁴¹ Usui uses the language of drawing and painting here to describe the shortcomings of prior *kikōbun* prose, suggesting a desire to infuse modern travel writing with these elements of visual composition.

Just as we saw a shift in Usui's rhetorical stance towards science in “Kikōbun-ron” 紀行文論 (On *kikōbun*, 1907), so too do we see a strong statement of *kikōbun*'s independence from concepts of visual art in this essay. In “Kikōbun ni tsukite” Usui declares sharply that “*kanbun* and *kanbun chokuyakutai* 漢文直訳体 (*kanbun* transcribed into Japanese-style prose) are insufficient for giving life to natural descriptions...only when we have imported, established, refined, and carefully selected new words [for colors] will we succeed in creating a new prose for description of natural scenery.”⁴² In contrast, two years later in “Kikōbun-ron” Usui complains that “one sees a lot of fancy new color words in *kikōbun* these days, but while it's technically ‘new,’ it isn't very effective (because it relies on the power of another medium, painting, rather than using the medium at hand).”⁴³ Once again, while this constitutes a direct

⁴¹ “Kikōbun ni tsukite,” in KUZZS, v. 4, p. 485.

⁴² “Kikōbun ni tsukite,” in KUZZS, v. 4, pp. 488–89.

⁴³ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZZS, v. 5, p. 377.

contradiction, I would argue that it does not represent ambivalence on Usui's part, so much as a shift in rhetorical strategy—at this point in Usui's *kikōbun/sangaku bungaku* project, his primary goal was to elevate *kikōbun* to the same level as *shōsetsu* 小説 (prose fiction), and in order to do so he had to show that the travel writing genre could exist independent of reliance on outside influences such as science and art: “Writing can stand on its own without resorting to words from painting, so a theory of writing shouldn't be built on a comparison between the two.”⁴⁴

Notwithstanding this rhetorical opposition to concepts of visual arts in writing, Usui continued to write extensively about landscape and mountain painting. In “Shizen byōsha to geijutsu,” for example, Usui gives an overview of the history of writing and painting on natural subjects, focusing on the art and literature of the mountains. After a lengthy discussion of literature, Usui transitions to his survey of mountain painting by suggesting that “the eyes are the conduit” for developing the affinity with nature necessary to interpret and depict it in art, so “in disciplining ourselves in the question of ‘how should one see,’ let us consider mountain painting.”⁴⁵ In “Shizen to sakka” 自然と作家 (Nature and writers, 1910), Usui juxtaposes his comparison of writers Ogawa Mimei 小川未明 (1882–1961) and Yoshie Kogan 吉江孤雁 (1880–1940; also known as Yoshie Takamatsu 吉江高松) with a comparison of European landscape painters Giovanni Segantini (1858–1899) and Arnold Böcklin (1827–1901).⁴⁶ And of course Usui mentions the art criticism of John Ruskin frequently in his writing on mountains, painting, and literature.⁴⁷ These and other frequent painting critiques, references to visual art, and

⁴⁴ “Kikōbun-ron,” in KUZZ, v. 5, p. 378.

⁴⁵ “Shizen byōsha to geijutsu,” v. 6, p. 152.

⁴⁶ See “Shizen to sakka,” in KUZZ, v. 6, pp. 167–80.

⁴⁷ Mentions and discussions of Ruskin's influence on Usui abound in the existing scholarship on Usui. For an extended example including textual analysis, see Kumagai Akihiro, “Kikōbun no jiritsusei to atarashiki ‘shizen’bi—*Nihon Arupusu daiikkan no kokoromi*” 紀行文の自立性と新しき「自然」美—日本アルプス第一巻の試み—,

uses of terms and techniques from painting in critiques of literature, all suggest that despite his attempt to distance *kikōbun* from the medium of painting in “Kikōbun-ron,” Usui continued to see value in applying his knowledge of the visual arts to his travel writing criticism and composition.

Visuality in Usui’s *sangaku bungaku*

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the scientific gaze—a view of natural objects that favored objectivity and precision—influenced the way Kojima Usui and other writers conceptualized literary depictions of nature. Above, I have introduced the way that Usui incorporated concepts from the visual arts into his discussions of landscape depiction in literature. Now I will turn to Usui’s *kikōbun*, the praxis of his *sangaku bungaku*, to consider how Usui’s theories of visuality in literature played out when he applied them to his own writing. In Usui’s mountain climbing chronicles, scientific knowledge and artistic vision were integrated within his scenic descriptions; but the result was greater than the sum of these parts, neither overly analytical and photographic, nor painterly and sentimental.

In *Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki* 白峰山脈縦断記 (Crossing the Shirane Range, 1910), first published as a complete *kikōbun* in *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan* 日本アルプス第一巻 (The Japanese Alps, volume 1, 1910), Usui describes his journey in late July 1908 with other members of the JAC, beginning from Nishiyama Onsen to the east of the Southern Alps, climbing via the east branch of the Ōikawa River to Mount Shirogōchi, and from there along the ridge of the Akaishi Range to Mount Kita, descending via the Norogawa River valley.

in “Meiji kōki ni okeru kikōbun no ‘shinpo’ to janru no jiritsusei: Kojima Usui no riron to jissen o chūshin ni” (PhD dissertation, Dōshisha University, 2014), pp. 127–59.

In regards to the outline I have given here, it is worth noting that Usui does not actually lay out his itinerary in so many words, nor does he provide a map with a clear indication of the path traveled during the excursion. Rather, just enough details are provided throughout the narrative that the climber's footsteps can be traced by an observant reader. This may seem a trivial detail, but it represents an important defining characteristic of Usui's mountain narratives: Usui's *kikōbun* were not intended to be guidebooks or travel itineraries, but literary evocations of mountain climbing experiences informed by detailed knowledge of the terrain traveled. This subtle use of detail to implicitly situate the narrative topographically—further examples of which will appear below—demonstrates Usui's concern for utilizing scientific knowledge, while relegating it to the background of the text.

Another example of this principle is in the way the narrator evokes the transitions between different elevation ranges during the ascent. As they begin climbing the valley up towards Mt. Ōkomori, they take “a path that led into a coniferous forest dominated by spruce [*Picea jezoensis* var. *hondoensis*] and hemlock [*Tsuga sieboldii*].”⁴⁸ Farther along, “the occasional scraggy white birch [*Betula platyphylla* var. *japonica*] began to mix in with the other trees,” and the party “also began to see Veitch's silver fir [*Abies veitchii*].”⁴⁹ As “the incline grew steadily steeper...the silver fir grew gradually smaller,” and by the time “the silver fir were only about a meter or a meter and a half high...[t]he peak of the mountain seemed to be almost on top of us.”⁵⁰ Eventually, “the creeping pine [*Pinus pumila*] finally came into view,” and “[t]here was a stark line between the creeping pine and the band of silver fir,” with only “[o]ne

⁴⁸ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 358.

⁴⁹ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 359.

⁵⁰ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 360.

or two silver fir, their seeds presumably scattered by the wind, [standing] dejectedly among the creeping pine.”⁵¹

Usui’s use of the names of the specific botanical specimens he encounters in these pages effectively sets the scene, but the effect goes beyond simple background description. The transition from dense spruce-and-hemlock coniferous forest, to Veitch’s silver fir, to creeping pine, corresponds to the steady increase in elevation as the group of climbers makes their way up the mountain. The concept of elevation-based plant distribution would likely have been familiar to many of Usui’s readers. He mentions the concept in several essays,⁵² and the vegetation bands are explained in detail in works such as Miyoshi Manabu and Makino Tomitarō’s 1906 *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan* 日本高山植物圖譜第一卷 (Illustrated survey of Japanese alpine plants, volume 1), discussed in the previous chapter.⁵³ Though he mentions the steepness of the incline, Usui does not refer to the actual process of ascent or the relative altitude at different stages of their climb. Rather, the association of certain plant species with the environment of specific elevations ensures that invoking the names of those plants gives a visual reference for the party’s progress from valley to ridge. Usui’s mobilization of his and his readers’ knowledge of alpine botanical science creates a dynamic narrative of his ascent from valley floor to mountain ridge, without resorting to the kind of pedantic explanation of scientific principles that had earned him criticism in the past.⁵⁴

In addition to imparting a sense of movement and transition to the narrative, Usui’s use of the specific natural features of the landscape he travels through contributes to the mood and

⁵¹ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 361.

⁵² For example, see his enumeration of a list “based on a report from the Forestry Bureau” in “Shinrin biron” 森林美論, in KUZS, vol. 5, p. 195. See also a different version of the concept in his botanical addendum to “Yarigatake tankenki” 鎗ヶ嶽探検記, “<Furoku> Yarigatake no shokubutsu” 《附録》鎗ヶ嶽の植物, in KUZS, vol. 4, p. 214.

⁵³ See both English and Japanese introductions in Miyoshi Manabu and Makino Tomitarō, *Nihon kōzan shokubutsu zufu daiikkan (teisei saihan)* (Tokyo: Seibidō, 1907).

⁵⁴ That is, in the *Bunshō sekai* 文章世界 roundtable article on *kikōbun* authors discussed in chapter 3.

thematics of the passage—a generally gloomy ascent becomes the setting for a reflection on the solitude of human existence within the vastness of nature.

As the travelers awake on the first morning of the narrative,⁵⁵ the mood seems bright, as if the party is being welcomed by the landscape.

I awoke at 4:30 this morning. The birds were chirping brightly, their voices like a fire spreading from peak to peak. Birdsong emerged from the white-flowering hydrangea growing atop the hut in which we had slept, and from the beard lichen-draped conifers. Everywhere the voices resounded, harmonizing with the water, the rocks, and the trees, and shook awake the visitors to this valley.⁵⁶

The mood is not quite so welcoming when they awake on the second day and prepare to ascend to the ridgeline, as the bird calls sound “as if they had come from the spirits of some cold, white porcelain vessel gone transparent from years submerged in the valley stream.”⁵⁷

Hints of death and rot dominate the proceeding passage. After noticing a “single oak leaf floating...like a torn-off scrap of paper,” the party enters a forest whose trees “were not large, but stood tall and thin, and their skin was dry like that of an old man.”⁵⁸ Leftover trunks from a decades-old logging enterprise lay scattered about, and “[f]erns and moss clung half-heartedly to the rotting trunks”; “[w]ith each step the heel was gently sucked into the soft soil, and even as we moved higher and higher in elevation, it was as if we were being swallowed farther down into the gloomy earth.”⁵⁹ As the narrator begins to notice “scraggy white birch” and “withered, pitiful” Veitch’s silver fir mixed in with the other vegetation, he notes that the air is “cool and damp, with not a hint of warmth,” and that though the sun is high in the sky, “since we were in a

⁵⁵ Not actually the first day of their excursion. The party had already crossed one ridge line to enter the Ōikawa River valley; this *kikōbun* begins from their campsite at the bottom of this valley, the point at which they had to turn back in the previous year (which was recounted in the preceding *kikōbun* in the volume, “Shirane sanmyaku ni hairu ki” 白峰山脈に入る記, in *KUZS*, vol. 6, pp. 291–345.

⁵⁶ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 348.

⁵⁷ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 358.

⁵⁸ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 358–59.

⁵⁹ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 359.

deep forest its powerful rays were turned away by the treetops and never reached the ground.”⁶⁰

The use of light and shadow, and dark colors like green (the coniferous trees and moss) and black (the wet soil), combined with the figurative language of aging and emaciation create a visual and visceral sense of the gloom and decay that press down upon the climbers, pulling them down even as they make their way up the mountain.

The gloom is punctuated by points of color and light, for which the section, “Shirobana shakunage to Takane bara (Shirane sanmyaku no ikkaku ni tatsu ki)” 白花石楠花と高根薔薇 (白峰山脈の一角に立つ記) (White rhododendron and alpine rose (A corner of the Shirane Range)) is named. As the climbers emerge from the forest and are confronted by the imposing mountain peak and the “cold, moisture-laden air,” they shout out their elation at the discovery of a white flowering rhododendron. The narrator describes the flowers: “The white snow of Mount Shirane... The white flowers of the rhododendron that grew up soaking in the meltwater from that snow, they scattered their fragrance to the alpine breezes, sitting here alone in these forest depths,” and also notes nearby “a tiny yellow violet blooming on the ground.”⁶¹ Farther along, the narrator, shielding his face from the howling wind in a fissure in the rock, “discovered an alpine rose [*Rosa nipponensis*] blooming deep red [*kō o sashite* 紅を潮して].”⁶² Introducing these colors allows Usui to use a broader palette in his descriptions, creating a more well-rounded visual scene. The bright colors are like pinpricks of light on the otherwise dark, misty canvas the narrator paints of the mountain environment.

The colors also serve to vary the mood of the passage, reassuring the reader that the mountains are not home only to cold darkness. When the climbers encounter the rhododendron,

⁶⁰ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 359.

⁶¹ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 361.

⁶² “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 362.

they cry out in exultation, a response the narrator attributes to their position as mountaineers: “From whom else but a mountaineer⁶³ could such a voice of exuberance, forgetting society and humanity, spring up from the depths of the heart, all over a single bush?”⁶⁴ The narrator, “struck by the mystery of alpine flora,” is even more moved by the crimson alpine rose than the white rhododendron, which “had its purity, but lacked warmth...at first sight of this [alpine rose], I couldn’t bear it.”⁶⁵ These episodes demonstrate the heights of emotion experienced by mountaineers on their journeys in the mountains.

It is perhaps worth noting that Usui makes an overt reference to painting in the alpine rose passage. He compares his experience (admitting that he made the connection only after returning home from the climb) to Giovanni Segantini’s⁶⁶ *Petalo di rosa* (Rose leaf, 1890), which he claims was inspired by the artist’s discovery of an alpine rose in the Alps among the early-summer snows. A portrait of the painter’s lover Bice Bugatti as she wakes from sleep, the bright blush of her face against the stark white background, the Cross hanging above her bed, and the title of the painting all point to an interpretation of the work as a celebration of life and rebirth. Usui’s allusion to the painting suggests parallels between his own alpine rose scene and the symbolism of Segantini’s painting.⁶⁷

⁶³ The term is rendered *tozanka* 登山家, with the phonetic transliteration *mauntiniā* マウンティニアー (mountaineer) rendered above the *kanji* characters.

⁶⁴ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 361.

⁶⁵ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 362.

⁶⁶ Usui discusses Segantini elsewhere, identifying him as one of the only accomplished mountain painters in European landscape painting. See, for example, “Shizen to sakka,” in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 178–79, where Usui refers to him as “the master mountain painter Segantini” [*sangaku gasei Seganchini* 山岳画聖セガンチニ].

⁶⁷ To make matters even more interesting, recent forensic analysis of the canvas of *Petalo di rosa* has revealed that the final painting was drawn on top of an earlier picture titled *Tisi gallopante* (galloping consumption, a reference to tuberculosis). In other words, *Petalo di rosa* represents a reworking of an earlier painting that explored death into one that celebrated life. This overlay of life and death in the painting further strengthens the parallel with Usui’s episode, which juxtaposes the life represented by the rose with the desolation of the surrounding mountain landscape. See the press release for the 2015 exhibition on the results of this investigation, Gallerie Maspes, “Segantini: *Petalo di rosa* (Rose petal), Investigations and Discoveries,”

http://galleriemaspes.com/immagini_sito/Comunicati%20stampa/Press%20Release_Segantini.pdf.

While these episodes of bright color hint at the powerful joys that can be found in the mountains, their scarcity also serves to highlight the desolation that dominates the passage. Just as the bright whites, yellows, and reds stand starkly against the dominant mist-gray and pine-green, the joys of discovering beauty are punctuations to the overpowering solitude of the scene. Indeed, the sheer ecstasy inspired by a lone rhododendron, which the narrator explains is the sole purview of the mountaineer, may be possible precisely because of the baseline of isolation that defines the climbing experience.

Arriving at what he supposes is the high point of Mt. Ōkomori, the narrator describes the scene and reflects on his state of mind.

Finally, I came to the mountain's high point—or so I thought, though it was hard to be sure with the dense fog... The rest of the party still hadn't joined me, so I sat down on the rock and waited quietly in the fog. It felt like the mist was attacking me with triangular, sensitive antennae. This was no longer mist, but rain. The rocks and pines raised a hoarse voice of desolation itself. I was utterly alone; no heaven, no earth, only the constant friction of one entity against another, the gusting wind and the mist. The voice of loneliness in this world is not the wind blowing on an autumn plain, nor is it the keening of factory chimneys; it is the voice of the alpine mist.⁶⁸

In this passage, though the climber finds himself at the top—his destination, usually an occasion for excitement, celebration, or at least relief—he is met with the culmination of the oppressive gloom that accompanied most of the ascent. Though he is only alone for a short time, as the other party members join him shortly hereafter, the pressing gray of the mist and the howling of the wind effectively isolate him from any meaningful perception of the outside world. Though the man stands atop the mountain, he finds himself desolate and alone.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ “Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 363–64.

⁶⁹ Interestingly, while this isolation brings to mind the kind of Romantic solitude only achievable by the lone climber—to be sure, a sentiment explored in the summit scenes of other of Usui's *kikōbun*—this element of alpine isolation is noticeably absent from this particular passage, highlighting all the more the excitement of the colorful encounters with the flowers.

The *kikōbun* is interspersed with photographs, which complement the visual qualities of the text. The photograph titled *Nezumiiro no inshō* 鼠色の印象 (Impressions of gray; see Figure 3), for example, occupies a page in the middle of the section of the same name. Its depiction of a hazy Mount Fuji in the middle of the frame, sandwiched by a cloudy gray sky above and dark, almost black ranges of mountains in the foreground, reinforce the dominance of gray and other dark colors in the passages above. The photograph itself suggests an aesthetic of monochromatic haziness and obscured vision, though there does not appear to be any positive assessment of this aesthetic in the text. Other photographs included in the text show a rock-studded river bed disappearing into a dark, gloomy wall of trees, and craggy ridgelines and mountain peaks against gray sky lines. An appendix lists and describes each image, providing the name of the photographer or artists and in many cases the date and even the time of composition.

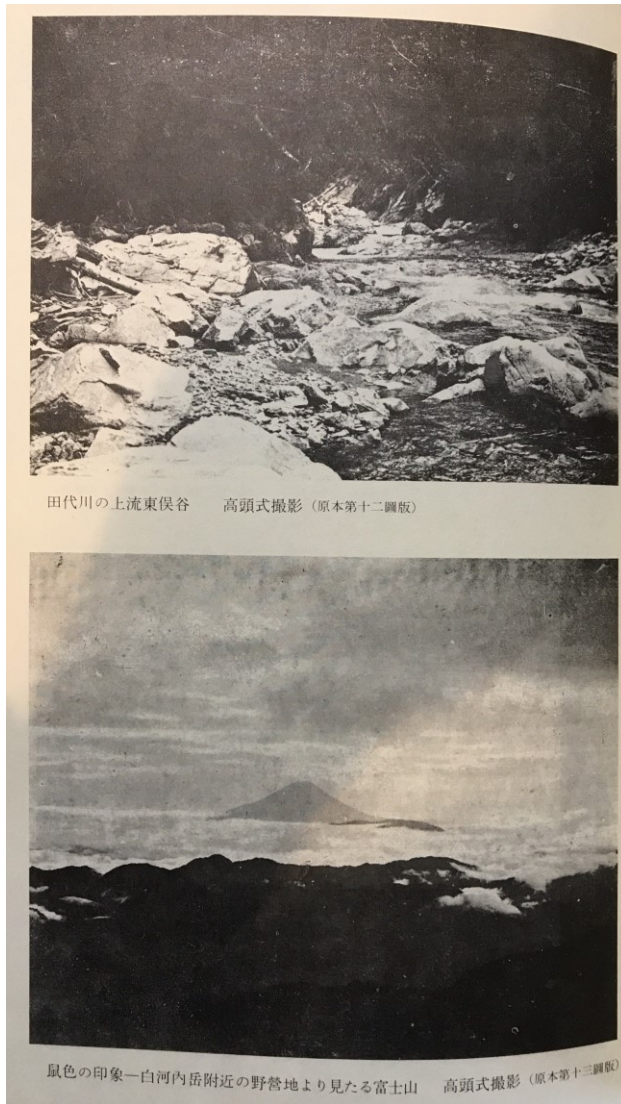


Figure 3: *Nezumiiro no inshō*

Two of the photographs included in *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan*. *Nezumiiro no inshō* is the bottom image. Note that in Usui's original publication, the photographs were spread throughout the text, and the photographs that accompany *Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki* were each included in the section with which they were associated. Takatō Shoku, *Tashirokawa no jōryū higashimatadani* and *Nezumiiro no inshō*, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 360.



Figure 4: Mount Kita and surrounding peaks

Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan contains some innovative visuals, including this photograph/sketch combination. The photograph (of Mount Kita and surrounding peaks) is printed by itself on one page (right), and the previous page is a translucent overlay with a sketch of the important ridge and contour lines that distinguish the various mountains, with notations for peak names, rivers, and other orienting information (sketch overlaying photograph pictured in left image). The photograph was taken by Takatō Shoku, but Usui does not mention the sketch or its author in the appended description of the image. Takatō Shoku, *Ainodake setsuden yori Shirane Kitadake oyobi Kai-Komagatake sanmyaku o nozomu*, in *KUZS*, v. 6, p. 152.

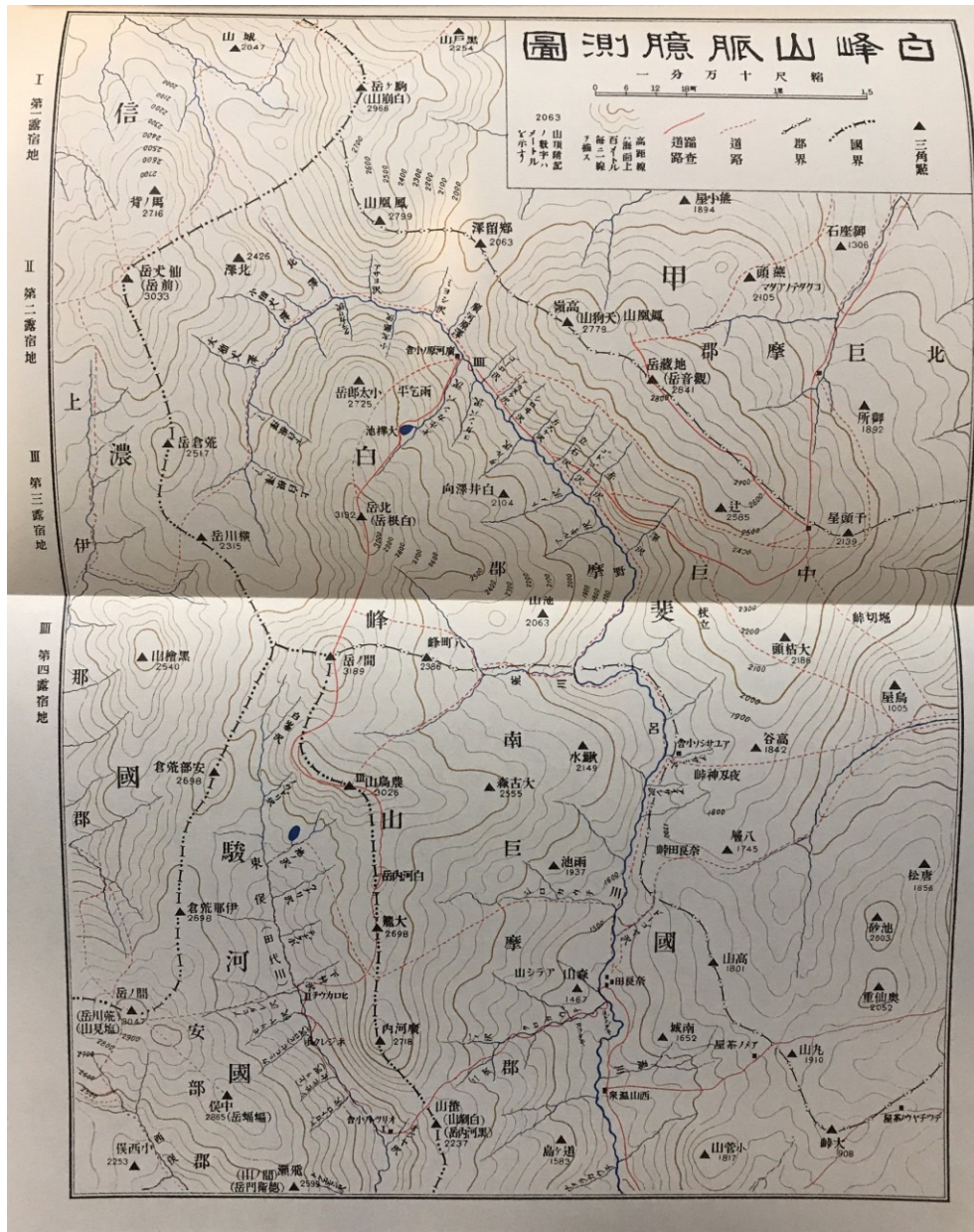


Figure 5: Estimated map of the Shirane Range

The map included in the third revised printing of *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan*, which included updates and revisions of the map included in the original printing. The map is printed on a double-sized page that folds out to the left to reveal the full map (in the image above, the top of the map is affixed to the book binding). Takatō Shoku, “Shirane sanmyaku okusokuzu” 白峰山脈臆測圖, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 392.

Another notable extra-textual visual element is the detailed map included in *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan* (see Figure 5).⁷⁰ The official government triangulation survey of Japan had begun in 1874, and a geological survey began in 1882. Nevertheless, only nine major peaks had been surveyed by 1894 (when Shiga Shigetaka's *Nihon fūkei-ron* was published), and though 1:50,000 and 1:20,000 topographical maps were completed and made commercially available over the next several decades, the climbers in the JAC found them essentially worthless for their purposes. In 1903, Usui complained that “the Army General Staff 1:20,000 topographical maps are useless because the mountain sections are mostly unpublished; the 1:200,000 maps are based on compilation rather than survey, so they can't be expected to be of any help in mountain areas; the *Nōshōmushō* 農商務省 [Ministry of Agriculture and Trade] 1:200,000 geological maps should be the most reliable, but for some reason they aren't widely available.”⁷¹

The situation had not much changed by the time *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan* was published in 1910. In a commentary appended to the third revised printing, Takatō Shoku⁷² details the background of the map in *Nihon Arupusu dai-ikkan*, which he compiled. He explains that elevations and locations of triangulation points are based on the Army General Staff Land Survey's latest measurements, while “everything else was created based on the *kikōbun*, maps, photographs, and sketches published in *Sangaku*, and the materials we gathered when we were in the area.”⁷³ Takatō asserts that “I am confident that this is the closest to reality of any map published of the area to date.”⁷⁴ And this was not an isolated occurrence: Kondō Nobuyuki notes

⁷⁰ See “Shirane sanmyaku okusokuzu” 白峰山脈臆測図, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 392.

⁷¹ “Tozan ni tsukite” 登山に就きて, in KUZS, v. 5, p. 437.

⁷² 高頭式 (1877–1958). Real name Takatō Nihei 高頭仁兵衛. One of the founding members of the Japanese Alpine Club, its second president (1933–1935), and author of the important encyclopedia of Japanese mountains, *Nihon sangakushi* 日本山岳志 (Japanese mountain gazetteer, 1906).

⁷³ From Kondō, “Kaidai” 解題, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 529.

⁷⁴ From Kondō, “Kaidai” 解題, in KUZS, v. 6, p. 529.

that Nakamura Seitarō made a map of the Northern Alps based on the observations and reports of all the parties who climbed there during the summer of 1910, which remained the most accurate map of the area until the 1:50,000 maps came out several years later.⁷⁵

These instances of amateur mapmaking attest to the importance of visual qualities in the *kikōbun* and other writings being exchanged among JAC members. Vivid depictions were necessary to convey the specific, dynamic landscape of the mountain areas under development for recreation—dynamic because activities such as mining, logging, and of course climbing itself altered the landscape. The subsequent inclusion of these maps in *kikōbun* creates a feedback loop that engenders increasing levels of visual accuracy and consistency, as publication created opportunities for feedback from other members of the community as they affirmed or suggested alterations to visual representations of the landscape.

In this section of *Shirane sanmyaku jūdanki*, Usui's approach to creating a literary-visual depiction of the mountain experience is on full display. The use of specific details about the natural features of the landscape lends authenticity to the scene, locating the events of the narration in a specific ecosystem as well as geographical locale. The scientific details also push the narrative forward, showing the progress of the climbers visually rather than simply telling the reader how far they have ascended. Nevertheless, the narrator's scientific knowledge is unobtrusive, and there is no overt explanation of the details provided. This is complemented by an equally unassuming application of visual descriptors. Misty gray and dark green, brown, and black dominate the palette, with brief punctuations of bright white, yellow, and red, and skeletal trees and razor-sharp ridges and crags define the lines of the landscape. The monochrome

⁷⁵ Kondō, *Kojima Usui ge*, p. 234.

photographs of ridge and valley that intersperse the text reinforce the overpowering sense of a sharp-lined, dark-gray wasteland.⁷⁶

These details provide the visual qualities of the mountaineering experience Usui creates in his *kikōbun*, but this is only part of the equation. As he argues in his critical writings, the full picture is only complete when the artist's knowledge of the subject and creative skills are used in concert with the artist's own perspective to create a work of art that shows the landscape through the lens of the viewing subject. Thus in the *kikōbun* analyzed above, the landscape descriptions are not simple sketches of natural scenery; they set a specific mood that parallels that of the narrator, and are used to thematic effect, to explore the feeling of isolation and despair the human faces when confronted with the vast, uncaring alpine expanse.⁷⁷

All of these elements combine in Usui's *kikōbun* to create a literature of the mountains that explores the relationship between humans and their natural environment through an individual's vital, dynamic experience with the landscape. Usui's unique approach to integrating objective knowledge and understanding of natural features with the subjective, emotional response of the experiencing individual to their surroundings makes his literature relevant to a discussion of the way views of landscape changed in Meiji Japan.

⁷⁶ To be sure, the "wasteland" aesthetic I speak of here is reminiscent of the sublime of alpine landscapes described with awe in the alpine literature of Europe. In my reading of this passage there is nothing to suggest a positive appraisal of the awful, oppressive power of nature, but the same could certainly be said of the European sublime in many of its iterations. I fear a simple ascription of the presence or even influence of the European notion of the "sublime" to Usui's work would be reductive, though certainly the role the concept played in his literature warrants further scrutiny.

⁷⁷ This imbuing of natural objects with the emotions of the artist is described by Ruskin using the term "pathetic fallacy." See John Ruskin, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy," in *Modern Painters Volume III*, vol. 5 of *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009–2010), pp. 201–20.

Re-envisioning Japan's natural spaces

That the Meiji period saw a shift in the way the Japanese viewed their natural environment has been discussed frequently. The best-known expression of this is Karatani's argument that "the notion of 'landscape' developed in Japan sometime during the third decade of the Meiji period,"⁷⁸ but the topic has been covered by scholars in fields outside of literature as well.⁷⁹

Whether Japan's landscape was newly discovered in the Meiji period or was part of a shifting language of discussing the nation's physical spaces, it is clear that Meiji artists—visual as well as literary—sought new ways of visualizing nature, and sought out new natural spaces to test their theories and techniques.

Nishida Masanori argues that Ōshita Tōjirō was central to the discovery of landscape during the Meiji period. Nishida attributes much of the interest in landscape painting that emerged in the mid-Meiji period to the influence of Alfred Parsons (1847–1920), a watercolor painter who traveled in Japan for nine months in 1892. Parsons held an exhibition of his work at the *Tokyo bijutsu gakkō* 東京美術学校 (Tokyo school of fine arts, 1887–1952), and Miyake Kokki 三宅克己 (1874–1954), Maruyama, and Ōshita were among the students who were impressed by the precision and realism of Parsons's watercolor landscapes.⁸⁰

According to Nishida, Ōshita and other painters, under the direct influence of Parsons, forged a new way of looking at Japan's natural environment, contributing to the fashioning of a modern landscape. It is not entirely clear what form this discovery of landscape took, however. Nishida includes several examples of Ōshita's and Parsons's paintings, but he focuses almost

⁷⁸ Karatani, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, trans. Brett de Bary, p. 19.

⁷⁹ For example, see Takeuchi Keiichi, "Landscape, Language and Nationalism in Meiji Japan," *Hitotsubashi Journal of Social Sciences* 20, no. 1 (1988), pp. 25-40; and Richard Okada, "'Landscape' and the Nation-State: A Reading of *Nihon Fukei Ron*," in *New Directions in the Study of Meiji Japan*, eds. Helen Hardacre and Adam L. Kern (Brill, 1997), pp. 90–107.

⁸⁰ Nishida, "Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen 'hakken,'" p. 242.

exclusively on the fact that they are based on “the interior regions which would form the core of our country’s national parks,”⁸¹ and there is little analysis to demonstrate what the modern concept of landscape looked like in these paintings.⁸²

Nevertheless, the suggestion that painters like Ōshita who were traveling to Japan’s deepest valleys and highest peaks were central to a refashioning of the way people in Japan related to their natural environment is an important one. While Nishida’s focus is on Ōshita and other watercolor landscape painters, I contend that the mountainous regions these painters visited were at the crux of this new conception of landscape that Nishida hints at. With the JAC and *Sangaku*, we begin to see a whole complex of intellectual and cultural activities—writing, painting, scientific research, and recreation among them—centering on Japan’s central ranges. Ōshita was not the sole originator of a novel modern view of landscape—nor, indeed, merely a conduit for a landscape concept that originated with Parsons or other “outsiders”—but rather a representative of a larger trend towards understanding the land in different ways, and consequently exploring parts of the land that had been overlooked in the past.

To put it another way, it is not sufficient to merely claim that Parsons and Ōshita introduced a new conception of landscape by visiting more remote regions and painting natural scenery in detail. What incited them to visit those areas, and to focus on that detail? These are of course key questions, requiring an investigation of issues ranging from nationalism and health to new techniques in art and literature and new methods and applications of scientific research. Modern mountaineering, and the related art and research that were produced alongside it, provide an intriguing central node from which to study how these various factors interacted in

⁸¹ A phrase Nishida uses repeatedly in his article. See, for example, Nishida, “Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen ‘hakken,’” p. 247.

⁸² Nishida includes samples of paintings by Parsons and Ōshita as examples of the way Ōshita was influenced by Parsons, and the kinds of subject matter these painters were interested in. See Nishida, “Fūkei gaka ni yoru Nihon no shizen ‘hakken,’” p. 241 and p. 246.

the construction of a modern notion of landscape. In particular, Kojima Usui's blend of scientific, visual, and other elements in his discussions of mountain literature and mountain aesthetics reveal the way in which Japan's modern landscape emerged from the complex mingling of discourses.

Landscape in Usui's mountain aesthetics

Usui's 1905 *Nihon sansui-ron* 日本山水論 (On Japanese nature) is a prime example of the emergence of Japan's mountains as "landscape" from the interaction of various discourses. Usui begins with a short chapter on his definition of the term "sansui."⁸³ In his discussion of this *kanji* compound's origins in the Chinese language, Usui reveals some of the nationalist ideology that undergirded discussions of landscape, referring to China and Japan in hierarchical terms: China historically boasts talented landscape painters, but because their mountains are less impressive than those of Japan, they have less raw material to work with,⁸⁴ and even though China's nature is on a whole inferior to Japan's, China has excelled in botany and *materia medica*.⁸⁵ In general, Usui discusses the two countries in terms of generalized geographical identities, associating Japan with islands, mountains, and water, and China with the continent, plains, and aridity. In

⁸³ An alternative translation for which is, indeed, "landscape." Kären Wigen notes that the title of Usui's work is so similar to Shiga Shigetaka's 志賀重昂 (1863–1927) *Nihon fūkei-ron* 日本風景論 (1894) "that it is best rendered with identical English, as 'On Japanese Landscape.'" Wigen, *Discovering the Japanese Alps*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ While this seems to ignore the rich depiction of mountain landscapes in Chinese art, it should be understood that Usui is referring not just to their depiction, but to *authentic* depictions. In other words, he is suggesting that because Chinese artists had no real imposing mountains on which to base their depictions (a spurious claim, to be sure), they were guilty of basing their depictions on imagination rather than experience. "Sansui no igi" 山水の意義, in KUZS, v. 5, p. 8.

⁸⁵ "Sansui no igi," in KUZS, v. 5, p. 9.

fact, this comparison recalls similar rhetoric used in Shiga Shigetaka's *Nihon fūkei-ron*, the influence of which on Usui has been commented on by numerous scholars.⁸⁶

The next two chapters of *Nihon sansui-ron* expand on mountain aesthetics by incorporating an even wider variety of critical dimensions. “Nihon sangakubi-ron” 日本山岳美論 (On Japanese mountain aesthetics) considers the beauty of Japan's mountains from five perspectives: visual art, poetics, science, history, and space-time (*jikan narabi kūkanteki* 時間並空間的). Despite the presence of “aesthetics” in the title and the various sections, the essay is more of a meditation on the relationship between mountains and the people who both inhabit them and visit them from the city. The following chapter, “Tozan-ron” 登山論 (On mountaineering), analyzes the modern sport of mountain climbing from an even greater variety of angles, arguing for its physical and mental benefits to individuals and its contributions to fields such as science and literature. Together, the two essays constitute an apology in favor of mountains: Usui is essentially expounding a theory of mountains that sees them as a landscape in their own right, and he breaks down his argument into the various factors out of which this conception of landscape emerges.

While Usui's analysis in these two essays is somewhat fluid in its logic—his discussion tends to float around the topic of each section, and the flow of his argumentation is sometimes difficult to grasp—his attempt to dissect and examine the origins of mountain beauty is suggestive. Rather than take the beauty of mountains for granted, or attribute it to an intrinsic trait of either the mountains themselves or their observers, his enumeration of the factors from which mountain beauty derives amounts to an acknowledgement of the contingency of the very

⁸⁶ For a reflection on the presence of nationalist elements in Shiga's work, see Nobuko Toyosawa, “An Imperial Vision: *Nihon Fūkeiron* (On the Landscape of Japan, 1894) and Naturalized Nature,” *Studies on Asia* 3, no. 1 (March 2013): pp. 25–64.

concept of mountain aesthetics. Though he does not say so in as many words, in these essays Usui is describing the emergence of Japan's mountains as a national landscape from the context of modern politics, aesthetics, and modes of knowledge.

Of course, as ever, Usui's primary interest was in the intersection of artistic sense and scientific knowledge in alpine experiences, and the bulk of the remaining chapters of *Nihon sansui-ron* are dedicated to their analysis. Chapter four, "Nihon sankei gairon" 日本山系概論 (An overview of Japan's mountain ranges), is an introduction to the geography of Japan's mountains. He follows the latest research in order to give an accurate and detailed account of the geographical disposition of Japan's important mountains, but his intention in the essay is more than a simple geographical overview. He explains at the outset that "the Japanese mountains have already been described geographically by Naumann, Rein, and Harada, but they bear more scrutiny because they are the origin of life in Japan."⁸⁷ Throughout the essay he follows the ranges of Japanese mountains from north to south, introducing the various smaller ranges and groups, but discussing them for the most part not in scientific but in cultural terms—his quotations and anecdotes about specific mountains and ranges derive not only from scientific research, but from sources such as the Buddhist monk Enkū 円空 (1632–1695), late-Edo period Confucian scholar Soga Taiken 曾我耐軒 (1816–1870), and Romantic poet Kitamura Tōkoku 北村透谷 (1868–1894). This essay is yet another expression of the way that Japan's mountain landscapes emerge from geographical research⁸⁸ and a variety of socio-cultural elements.

⁸⁷ "Nihon sankei gairon," in KUZS, v. 5, p. 66.

⁸⁸ In terms of Usui's geographical explanation of Japan's mountains, the essay is doubly interesting, in that it also represents the historical contingency of scientific knowledge. Usui's description of Japan's geography is based on the now-obsolete theories of Harada Toyokichi 原田豊吉 (1861–1894). Usui explains that Japan is part of three mountain ranges: The "Karafuto range" (*Karafuto sankei* 樺太山系) from the north, the "Kunlun range" (*Konron sankei* 崑崙山系) from the south/west, and the "Fuji range" (*Fuji sanmyaku* 不二山脈) traversing their intersection in the middle. For Meiji-period Japanese, this geographical schema for "*waga shima-teikoku*" 我が島帝国 (our

The rest of the book follows a similar pattern—analyzing different aspects of mountain aesthetics through a combination of cultural-historical references, scientific evidence, and visual analysis of natural scenery. In “Yama to murasakiro” 山と紫色 (Mountains and the color purple), for example, he outlines several references to Mount Tsukuba 筑波山 and other mountains using the color purple; explains how the mineral composition of granite interacts with light to produce the purple tint; and discusses the unique beauty of various granitic mountains in Japan.

Subject/object: Human agency in understanding the land

Usui’s approach to landscape is most apparent in his *kikōbun*, a representative example of which was analyzed above. In his *kikōbun*, Usui combined scientific—i.e., objective—knowledge of the natural features of the landscape with his personal—subjective—emotional responses to his surroundings. This is important for understanding how Usui’s writing speaks to the issue of landscape.

Usui’s landscape is not that of the premodern Japanese poetic tradition, based on convention and human emotion with very little consideration for the actual natural reality. Usui and other members of the JAC, artists who traveled for sketching—these artists placed great value on first-hand experience of a place and depictions that were based on that experience.

Nor is it the detached, *ari no mama* ありのまま (as it is) sketch-like approach to nature description. Usui insisted on the importance of the perspective of the viewing subject for

island empire, “Nihon sankei gairon,” in KUZS v. 5, p. 66) suggests both Japan’s uniqueness—the small-scale Fuji range dominating the center of the nation-empire—and the positioning of Japan at the center of larger pan-Asian geographical region extending from Russia far into the interior of the continent. In her essay, Toyosawa argues that Shiga Shigetaka deploys just this strategy. See Toyosawa, “An Imperial Vision,” pp. 46–47.

depicting nature in *kikōbun*. Attempting to simply reproduce a natural scene without any trace of the intervening human hand was not only fruitless, but it would result in a lifeless product, according to Usui

In one sense, this insistence on including the human subject's perspective in landscape depiction suggests a primary interest in exploring human subjectivity. Indeed, this is at the heart of Karatani's argument about the discovery of landscape: that landscapes were developed in literature to serve as an exterior backdrop against which to consider the interiority of the individual narrating subject. In the same way, Usui argues that even when nature is the subject, as in his nature-oriented *kikōbun*, such art is ultimately a way of developing individuality and subjectivity: "The artist extends his own sense onto the essence of a natural scene, so whether large or small, a phantom of the individual leaves its trace."⁸⁹ It is only as a consequence of this imprinting of the individual onto nature that "depictions of summer are brimming with life, and winter has the visage of dark melancholy"; these qualities do not inhere in the original natural phenomena, but are projected onto them by the human observer.⁹⁰ In a sense, nature is essentially meaningless without the intervention of the human subject.

Of course, this is not the end of the story. As we have seen above, one of Usui's primary goals with his mountain writing was to find a place for nature writing in what he saw as a literature dominated by human-focused *shōsetsu*. In the end, Usui's aim was to privilege nature in his writing, not to write it off as merely a vehicle of human expression. The idea of expression is important to Usui's argument. When the artist's trace is imprinted on their depiction of nature,

⁸⁹ "Nihon Arupusu no nanhan," in KUZS, v. 6, pp. 57–58.

⁹⁰ "Nihon Arupusu no nanhan," in KUZS, v. 6, p. 58.

“nature’s [*zōka* 造化] expression⁹¹ is reduced to a miniature copy,” and ultimately “the human acts as an intermediary for this expression.”⁹² According to Usui, attempting to depict nature “as it is” by attempting to eliminate the human hand has the effect of completely silencing its original expression.

When they [scientists, *kagakusha* 科学者] draw Mount Fuji, they draw lines. Near the summit the slope is 20°, at the foot the slope is 5° or 6°—in this manner, maintaining accuracy down to the hundredth decimal place, in some cases using every tool of accuracy except an actual ruler, they draw lines. But what they draw is not Mount Fuji; they draw lines. They are not Fuji, not because they differ from the original, but because the living expression “Fuji” is nowhere to be found.⁹³

The lines used in an exact rendering of a mountain, like the symbols H₂O used to represent water, are “signs [*kigō* 記号] proposed in order to imitate ‘reality’ [*jitsu* 実]”—they represent the real, but can never replace it.⁹⁴ This is because signs are arbitrary constructs, which only have meaning to the extent that humans have assigned agreed-upon meaning to them. A natural feature like Mount Fuji exists independent of and prior to any human-made signs used to represent it, and its “expression” lies in its uniqueness. Even the most precise depiction is but an imitation—“nature does not create the same thing twice”—and so the expression of the original natural phenomenon cannot exist except within itself.⁹⁵

This does not mean that depictions of nature cannot be meaningful, however. Though an accurate understanding of natural phenomena is important even in artistic depictions, as we have seen, it is not enough to stop there. Since nature only expresses itself once, in its original

⁹¹ The term is rendered *hyōji* 表示, with the phonetic transliteration *ekisupuresshon* エキスプレッション (expression) rendered above the *kanji* characters.

⁹² “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 58.

⁹³ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 59.

⁹⁴ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 59.

⁹⁵ “Nihon Arupusu no nanhan,” in KUZS, v. 6, p. 57.

manifestation in the natural world, that expression cannot be replicated in art. Therefore the artist must provide their own expression in their rendering of a natural scene.

Federico Marcon has shown how from the Edo period, *honzōgaku* 本草学 (*materia medica*) practitioners objectified nature—that is, configured individual natural specimens as objects of study and knowledge. Marcon describes “observational, descriptive, and representational practices that contributed to abstract plants and animals from their ecosystem and turned them into idealized species ready for commodification and manipulation,” and this materialized framework for understanding the natural environment was further developed from the Meiji period under the influence of westernized scientific practice.⁹⁶

Karatani Kōjin’s “discovery of landscape” was part and parcel of this objectification or abstraction of the environment, and Kojima Usui’s *sangaku bungaku* is a powerful example of the way that landscapes were reconfigured in Meiji Japan. Just as *honzōgaku* practitioners and then scientists made natural objects into medical, scientific, and economic commodities, so too did artists such as Usui recruit landscapes as resources for art.

Usui’s contribution to this movement to reconfigure landscape is notable in the way that it recognizes the human agency at the center of landscape art. He constructs a literature of nature that celebrates the importance and beauty of nature, while simultaneously acknowledging the way that natural beauty is constructed by human hands.

⁹⁶ Federico Marcon, *The Knowledge of Nature and the Nature of Knowledge in Early Modern Japan* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 228.

Configuring space through narratives of travel

This novel way of conceptualizing the natural environment as landscape contributed to the construction of national space in Meiji Japan. Usui's *kikōbun* can be read as a record of the narrator's movement through his physical environment, from the city, through towns, tunnels, and passes, to the top of the mountain. In this narrative, each consecutive space the narrator passes through on his journey can be mentally marked, creating a virtual map in the reader's mind. This narrative map can be understood in two ways. In terms of the project of "geographical enlightenment" proposed by Kären Wigen, this literary mapping is one part of the process of putting the Japanese Alps on the map. By bridging the cognitive gap between the modern urban center of the country and the uncharted peaks at its geographical center through the narrative journey between the two, mountain travel narratives make remote mountains more relevant and accessible to urban readers.

Another way of understanding the virtual map drawn by mountain travel narrative is as a way of relativizing the hierarchy of dichotomies such as urban/rural, civilization/wilderness, and human/nature and showing the contingency of spaces labeled as one or the other. Given a literary canon that made much of the distinction between the urbanity and modernity of the city and the rusticity of the provinces, and growing nativist interest in the primitive and the rural in reaction to headlong Westernization and urbanization, one might expect narratives such as Usui's to depict a movement from a modern, urban city to the pristine wildness of the mountain. In fact, the narrator is often at pains to display the complexity of perspectives and subjectivities that construct each scene, from the crowded train to the desolate mountain hut.

An example from one of Usui's best-known *kikōbun*, "Yarigatake tanken-ki" 槍ヶ岳探検記 (Account of an expedition to Mount Yari, 1903), illustrates the way the writer-mountaineer

configures his subjective relationship to the natural environment. The scene takes place on the train near Omi, Nagano Prefecture, shortly before the narrator disembarks and begins the journey by foot to the base of the mountain.

We might as well have been at the foot of a volcano—the stream I saw through the glass window flowed through grayish, clay-like earth, leaving deposits of red-brown soil, and the eddying water took on an opaque milky-white color. In the foreground, pinks, buckwheat, thoroughwort, arrowroot, golden lace, and bush clover bloomed in wild profusion, the diversity of colors mixing in confused disorder like breaking waves before my eyes. I knew I was among the mountains, entirely unaware of the train on which I rode.

A single stream flowed lazily directly through the middle of Saijo Station. Small birds pecked at insects as they flew through the air, bursting from and returning to the surrounding grasses, and the mountainsides that formed the backdrop to the scene were tinted red and formed a broken curve. There was a cottage on the right side of the river; resembling the uneven teeth of a comb, the roughly woven fence held dew-covered chrysanthemums and dahlias in full bloom. There happened to be a girl of about three or five years crossing a bridge over the river, carrying an umbrella and wearing high-toothed lacquered clogs. I was suddenly aware of the train on which I rode, entirely forgetting that I was among the mountains.⁹⁷

This passage is notable for the way it highlights the contingency of the various overlapping spaces the mountaineer inhabits as he makes his journey. The “natural” and the “human” are not merely juxtaposed and contrasted, but intermixed and combined like the profusion of colors that paint the field outside the train. The inversion of the final sentence in each paragraph shows the indeterminacy of the human subject vis-à-vis the surrounding landscape: he is at once one with the landscape, absorbed by its shapes and colors, and entirely conscious of the man-made machine that mediates and facilitates that interaction. While the narrator grants a level of autonomous agency to the landscape—the original Japanese *sanchū no kyaku-taru* 山中の客たる might be more literally translated “I was a visitor among the mountains”—he does not obscure his subjective agency in constructing the mountain landscape as a space through which the mountaineer moves.

⁹⁷ “Yarigatake tanken-ki,” in KUZS, v. 4, pp. 31–32.

Descriptions like these yield a depiction of the mountaineer as an observer who is aware of and questions his relationship to his physical environment, creating a conception of landscape that recognizes its own contingency. In his *sangaku bungaku*, Kojima Usui blends scientific knowledge and aesthetic sense, foregrounding the natural environment but tempering that focus with an awareness of the human subject-observer's role in configuring meaning in the landscape. Through the resulting literature he explores the relationship between humans and their natural environment.

The visual element of his literature is one of the keys to understanding the way it contributes to the construction of landscape in Meiji Japan. In the same way that scientifically accurate descriptions of nature grant authenticity and authority to landscape art, the visuality of Usui's nature writing is predicated on the assumption of a correspondence between the literary depiction and a real-life natural space, and the author's experience of that space. Furthermore, the visual aspects of Usui's textual descriptions, combined with the extra-textual photographs and illustrations, create a dynamic narrative of the mountaineer's alpine experience. Natural landscape is not presented merely as a thematic space for considering questions of personal subjectivity; it is given vitality through the narrator's vivid descriptions, and is given a place on the mental map of modern Japan that was being constructed during the Meiji period.

Conclusion

As I stood on the peak of Mount Jōnen, I thought to myself. This thing we call nature, it manifests and moves in the way that I feel. The “liberty of nature,” in other words, is the freedom to simply feel as one does. Last night I bathed in the pure light of the moon, today I tread a boundless expanse of clouds. This individual body, this spirit, this combustible existence called “I”—perhaps the universe that allows me passage to gaze upon creation is not so big as one would expect.

Even if I am destined to be buried in the silence of nature, at least I can say that my “self” at the top of the mountain was not the same self who was frightened by a single tiny mouse in the hut the night before.

—Kojima Usui, “Jōnendake no zettan ni tatsu ki” 常念岳の絶巔に立つ記

In the foregoing chapters, I have examined the literary criticism and travel writing of Kojima Usui, showing how his approach to the task of crafting a modern literary genre amidst the myriad changes that took place during the turbulent Meiji period (1868–1912) represent an as-yet underexplored perspective on the process of modernization in turn-of-the-century Japan. Though his name is little-known today, Usui was a prolific writer, and his work was well-read and well-received by his contemporaries. His efforts to effect fundamental change to the genre hierarchies of the Meiji-period *bundan* 文壇 literary world, while they did not ultimately have a lasting impact, are nevertheless worthy of consideration for what they reveal of the values and motivations that underlay the activities of Meiji-period writers.

With his amateur interest in alpine science, especially the debates surrounding glacial activity in the Japanese past, Usui was implicitly involved in the process of popularizing the relatively young practice of Japanese modern science. His writing therefore also provides a window on the way this practice developed in the late Meiji period, and on how it was perceived and appropriated by the general population. In the same way, Usui’s activities in art criticism and his blending of artistic theories with literary theories provide a noteworthy example of the ways

these two modern art forms interacted during their formative periods. And given the primary focus in Usui's writing on nature and the mountains in particular, his work also provides insight into the problem of the development of conceptions of landscape and the natural environment in Meiji Japan.

Based in Yokohama and writing about nature and travel, Kojima Usui was marginalized by the literary elite. Engaging in a debate with some of the representatives of the Tokyo-based literary establishment through a series of articles and essays, Usui defended his view of Japanese travel literature as a nature-based genre that could provide a corrective to the human-centered prose that he saw as dominating Meiji-period Japanese literature. By retracing the path Usui took throughout his literary career to arrive at the views he expresses in these essays, I have teased out the nuances in his arguments, giving a more complete account of the multitude of factors that informed Usui's approach to literary genre. Confronted with genres new and old, Japanese and foreign, and attempting to find a place for his own writing about the mountains in a context that favored a psychological, interiorized exploration of human subjectivity, Usui's attempted to contribute to the restructuring of the Japanese literary genre hierarchy that was being established in the Meiji period. While the travel writing and mountain writing that Kojima Usui championed as the equal of prose fiction never took their place at the peak of the hierarchy that Usui envisioned, the negotiations he made among various genres and fields of knowledge contribute to our understanding of the complex process of modern Japanese literature's formation.

In his writings on *kikōbun* 紀行文 (travel writing) and *sangaku bungaku* 山岳文学 (mountain writing), Usui engaged with a variety of fields outside of literary, most notably science and visual art. Given that both of these fields were undergoing the same process of modernization and transformation as literature in the turbulent Meiji period, putting those

processes in conversation with each other can lead to new insights not only about modern literature, but also about the institution of modern science and the formation of a modern landscape aesthetic. Kojima Usui provides a unique opportunity to consider all three fields—literature, science, and visual art—in tandem, as he actively sought to apply his amateur knowledge of and experience with the latter two fields to his prolific work in the former. In this dissertation, I have shown that Usui's discussions of scientific knowledge and the social role of the scientist were not simply attempts to borrow from science for literature, but were part of a larger project of popularizing science, making it more accessible to non-professionals and establishing a more clearly defined role for scientific research in Japanese society.

Likewise, Usui's efforts to understand the link between a natural phenomenon and the visual representation of that phenomenon by a human observer links his work to the fundamental changes that were taking place in Japan regarding the way the Japanese people related to their physical environment. Usui's focus on the meaning created in the interaction between a human individual and the natural environment they move through suggests a growing interest in humanity's place within the natural world. At the same time, his insistence on restructuring the mental map of the Japanese nation to include not just the famous places of old, but also the grand, unexplored mountain fastnesses forming the Japanese mainland's spine, shows the deep connections between modern views of the landscape and the modern nation.

The binary of subject/object is a thread that runs the length of my dissertation. It appears to be at the heart of Kojima Usui's thoughts on the human relationship to nature. Simply put, objectivity represents the scientific observation of natural phenomena, the relentless pursuit of factual knowledge about the origins and inner workings of the natural world; while subjectivity is human perception, the indelible imprint the observing human intellect leaves on anything it

contacts. To Usui, mountains and art were the two purest expressions of this dichotomy—mountains represent the synthesis of a wide variety of natural features, climates, and ecosystems, of which humans, a natural species, are but a part; while art is achieved through a synthesis of objective knowledge of the world and the artist’s subjective interpretation of their environment. Kojima Usui’s alpine writing was his attempt to express this dichotomy, to use the media of the mountains and of literature to express his understanding of nature and humanity.

Mountains left to climb

In this dissertation, I maintained a tight focus on the literature of Kojima Usui. This allowed me to examine his work from a variety of perspectives, deepening our understanding of this central figure in the establishment of modern Japanese mountaineering and Japanese mountain literature. In turn, his involvement in a variety of intellectual and cultural fields made him effective as a central node from which to reconsider the ways we understand such categories as modern literature and modern science. I believe this focus has allowed me to craft a concise and cohesive account of Kojima Usui’s work, while simultaneously permitting a varied application of that account to the broader context in which Usui’s work was situated.

There are, of course, limitations to such an approach. While Kojima Usui was central to the establishment of the Japanese Alpine Club (*Nihon sangakukai* 日本山岳会, est. 1905; hereafter JAC), its journal *Sangaku* 山岳 (Mountains, est. 1906), and the genre of Japanese mountain writing, he was of course only an individual within a community of climbers and writers who supported and complemented his efforts and carried on in his absence. It was also inevitable that I would focus on certain aspects of Usui’s work to the exclusion of others. In

particular, while my original research question had to do with concepts of nature and the natural environment, my project did not ultimately respond directly to the ecological issues that drove my original inquiry. I hope to address these and other issues in my future research projects.

Other mountain writers

In addition to Kojima Usui, there were a significant cohort of writers of mountain literature active during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The journal *Sangaku* was a central clearing house for the *sangaku bungaku* genre, and its pages were filled with writings by members of the JAC interested in refining the art of writing about the mountains. The back catalogues of the periodicals *Mizue* みづゑ (a watercolor painting journal started by Ōshita Tōjirō) and *Hakubutsu no tomo* 博物の友 (the journal of the *Nihon hakubutsugaku dōshikai* 日本博物学同志会, 1901-1911; several members of this natural history society were among the founding members of the JAC) were also home to mountain writing, and their contents can reveal more important connections and overlaps between the domain of mountain writing and the worlds of fine art and science.

Other important writers who helped establish the tradition of mountain writing include Tanabe Jūji 田部重治 (1884–1972), Kogure Ritarō 小暮理太郎 (1873–1944), and Nakamura Seitarō 中村清太郎 (1888–1967). On the textual level, inclusion of these authors in my research on early Japanese mountain literature would add variety in terms of style and approach. Usui's writing ranged from flowery, classically-inspired prose, to scientific meandering, to thematically dense and atmospheric. Kogure, who was much more interested in the climbing itself than writing or talking about his experiences, had a more brusque, unpolished prose. Tanabe treated

nature with respect, almost sacralizing the natural spaces of mountains; Nakamura took this almost religious devotion to nature even further, and Uryū Takuzō 瓜生卓造 considers Nakamura's writing to be the most outstanding of the genre during its early years, even over Usui's.¹

The writings of these authors can also shed light on a topic suggested by my project on Usui: mountain climbing as a sport and leisure activity. This topic would include consideration of such issues as the consolidation of different social classes, health and hygiene, and the conception of the nation. These writers promoted a more contemplative interaction with nature among the lower-elevation mountains closer to Tokyo, the metropolitan center of Japan, and their writings engage topics such as the physical and mental benefits of “escaping” from the city to the purity of nature. Looking at the Japanese literature of the mountains from the perspectives of health, leisure, and the nation, future research will help me understand of the historical view of the human-nature relationship I have begun to develop in this project.

Mountaineering and the nation

Another topic which I have only briefly touched on in the chapters of my dissertation is the undeniable linkage between mountaineering activities and international relations—that is, imperial expansion and colonialism. This was simply not a driving concern for the present project, but the topic has vast potential. For example, Peter H. Hansen and Peter L. Bayers have both argued that several famous ascents in the history of mountaineering can be understood as comprising multiple subjectivities, not limited to the privileged perspective of the European climber to whom the ascent was credited. They show what the mythologizing about the history

¹ Uryū Takuzō, *Nihon sangaku bungakushi* 日本山岳文学史 (Tokyo Shinbun Shuppanyoku, 1979).

of the sport reveals about themes such as masculinity and imperialism.² In her study of Kojima Usui and Shiga Shigetaka, Kären Wigen points out the connections between mountaineering and conquest, noting that “[t]he heyday of imperialism and geographical science was also the heyday of group climbs,” in particular the mobilization of youth through hiking and other outdoor pursuits.³

This question is relevant to Kojima Usui. The influence Shiga Shigetaka had on Usui has been noted by most of the scholars who have written about him, and Usui himself is not shy in attributing credit to Shiga for sparking interest in the mountains among Japanese youth. Usui’s mentor at the literary magazine *Bunko*, Takizawa Shūgyō 滝沢秋暁 (1875–1957), lamented Usui’s falling in with Shiga, worrying that Shiga’s nationalist-essentialist rhetoric was having a negative influence on Usui.⁴ I have found no overt evidence of Usui espousing nationalist or expansionist sentiments, and he in fact decried these kinds of sentiments in some of his writing.⁵ Of course this does not release Usui from further scrutiny on this subject, and the connections between mountaineering and the imperial gaze are undeniable. The role mountain climbing played in the Japanese expansion into Taiwan, Korea, and mainland China would provide a fascinating area of study for future research.⁶

² Peter H. Hansen, *The Summits of Modern Man: Mountaineering after the Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Peter L. Bayers, *Imperial Ascent: Mountaineering, Masculinity, and Empire* (Boulder, Colo: University Press of Colorado, 2003).

³ Kären Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps: Meiji Mountaineering and the Quest for Geographical Enlightenment,” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 2005), pp. 3–4.

⁴ See Kondō Nobuyuki, *Kojima Usui jō: yama no fūryū shisha den* 小島烏水上山の風流使者伝 (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2012), p. 123.

⁵ For example, when Usui regrets that the Japanese have so much appreciation for the descriptions of the Russian countryside in Turgenev yet seem to have no interest in their own natural beauties, he includes the qualification that “this is by no means a display of patriotic feelings on par with a certain narrow-minded sect of landscape theorists.” See “Shizen byōsha no geijutsu,” in vol. 6 of *Kojima Usui zenshū* 小島烏水全集 (Tokyo: Taishūkan Shoten, 1979) [hereafter KUZS], p. 139.

⁶ I have not encountered any references to Korea or China in Usui’s writings (his silence, of course, may be notable in itself), but he did write a report of a climb of Niitakayama 新高山 (Mount Yu 玉山 in the original Chinese; referred to as Niitakayama—“new high mountain”—by the Japanese during their occupation due to the revelation by

Mountain ecologies

The research question that originally prompted me to explore mountain literature revolved around Japanese concepts of nature, and how these changed during the Meiji period. In particular, I was intrigued by Gregory Golley's ecology-oriented approach to modernist literature in *When Our Eyes no Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism*. Golley attributes the emergence of what he calls "relational realism"—a modernist realism he finds in Yokomitsu Riichi (1898-1947), Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1886-1965), and Miyazawa Kenji (1896-1933) that privileges the web of relations between a multitude of subjects—to the influence of Einstein's theory of relativity, both in its general popularity and its effect on the philosophy of science.⁷ Against relational realism, Golley identifies in the literature before the modernism of the 1920s a form of positivist subjectivism, a trend both in science and literature of skepticism regarding the individual's ability to objectively perceive anything outside himself, and the resulting radical mistrust of any attempt at objective observation of external reality. In other words, Golley identifies in literary modernism a shift from privileging the observing subject and the psychology of perception, to a less stable subject and a more object-oriented approach to realist narrative.

I wondered if this kind of approach could be found earlier, in mountain literature. I believe that I have made a small step towards answering this question in this dissertation, but I hope to continue to explore this issue in my future research. Usui was intrigued by issues of

surveyors that it was over 100 meters higher than Mount Fuji), suggesting mountaineering activities in the colonial territories outside of Japan.

⁷ Gregory Golley, *When Our Eyes No Longer See: Realism, Science, and Ecology in Japanese Literary Modernism* 296 (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008).

subjectivity and objectivity in his writing about nature, and his negotiation with these concepts seems to suggest a potential conversation between my work and Golley's.

The notion that a term like "wilderness" is not static but changes over time, and is assigned different values at different historical moments, was central in the initial planning for this project. In his essay "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," environmental historian William Cronon traces the history of wilderness as a central tenet of the American environmental movement.⁸ Originally associated with biblical associations of desolation and terror, wilderness had so changed by the 20th century that Thoreau could proclaim that "in Wilderness is the preservation of the world";⁹ Cronon attributes these changes primarily to romantic notions of the sublime and the ideal of rugged individualism associated with the American frontier.

In my future research, I hope to expand the present study to contribute to an understanding of how such ideas related to the natural environment changed in Japan during the early 20th century. In his study of Inoue Yasushi's (1907-1991) 1957 novel *Hyōheki* (Wall of Ice), Kenneth R. Ireland argues that "[i]t is the topos of the mountain which represents, in Inoue's novel, a polar contrast with modern urban life."¹⁰ This notion of the mountain, and wild places in general, as a retreat from modern, urban life does not seem new by the 1950s; it echoes, for example, lines penned by Byron over a century earlier:

*Where rose the mountains, there to him were friends...
But in Man's dwellings he became a thing
Restless and worn, and stern and wearisome
Droop'd as a wild-born falcon with clipt wings,*

⁸ William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness: Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," *Environmental History* 1, no. 1 (January 1, 1996): pp. 7–28.

⁹ Henry David Thoreau, *Essays: A Fully Annotated Edition*, ed. Jeffrey S. Cramer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 260.

¹⁰ Kenneth R. Ireland, "Westonization in Japan: The Topos of the Mountain in Yasushi Inoue's 'Hyōheki,'" *Comparative Literature Studies* 30, no. 1 (1993): p. 22.

*To whom the boundless air alone were home.*¹¹

And yet, to Kojima Usui the mountains represented nothing if not a path to modernity itself: as Kären Wigen argues, “turn-of-the-century alpine enthusiasts celebrated the fact that climbing mountains was modern,” advocating for the improvement of access to climbing destinations and inviting their countrymen to join them.¹² Meiji mountaineers constructed their own relationship to Japan’s high places in their writing, laying the foundations for the kind of wilderness ideals expressed in later writing such as Inoue’s.

At the same time that they brought a new perspective to the relationship between the city and the mountain, mountain explorers also encountered local forms of human-environment relations. In his article on folk religious concepts of alpine environments, Scott Schnell uses the writings of Walter Weston (1860-1940), author of *Mountaineering and Exploration in the Japanese Alps* (1896) and credited as one of the guiding forces in the popularization of recreational climbing in Japan, to find examples of local understandings of mountain ecology.¹³ He identifies two distinct belief systems in two different settlements on the mountain: the inhabitants of the farming village located in the valley below Mount Kasagatake, the peak Weston is set on, repeatedly give excuses for why there are no guides to take him up the mountain; eventually it comes out that this is likely because of their fear of retribution from a jealous god for allowing a stranger access to the sacred precincts of the mountain. On the other hand, the hunters who live and work higher up the mountain’s slopes are more than happy to

¹¹ Quoted in Robert H. Bates, *Mystery, Beauty, and Danger: The Literature of the Mountains and Mountain Climbing Published in English before 1946* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Peter E. Randall Publisher, 2000), p. 18.

¹² Wigen, “Discovering the Japanese Alps,” p. 5.

¹³ Scott Schnell, “Are Mountain Gods Vindictive? Competing Images of the Japanese Alpine Landscape,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 13, no. 4 (2007): pp. 863–80.

conduct him to the top, and scoff at the villagers' fear of the god.¹⁴ Thus various ways of conceptualizing the relationship between humans and nature come together in one narrative, demonstrating the utility mountain writing can have for reconstructing Meiji and Taishō period views of that relationship.

In 1914, Usui published “Kamikōchi fūkei hogoron” 上高地風景保護論 (On the preservation of the landscape of Kamikōchi) in the *Shinano mainichi shinbun* 信濃毎日新聞 (Shinanō daily newspaper). In this essay Usui decries the threat of largescale logging in the area, and he shows as much concern for the effect the loss of beauty of the landscape will have on visitors like himself as for the threat to the health of local ecology. Nevertheless, the fact that he raises such issues at all links him to other isolated voices for environmental awareness in the Meiji period, including Tanaka Shōzō 田中正造 (1841–1913), who advocated for the people and environment affected by pollution from the Ashio Copper Mine,¹⁵ and Minakata Kumagusu 南方熊楠 (1867–1941), who protested the Meiji government's Shinto shrine consolidation efforts on the grounds of its detrimental effects on both the local people to whom the shrines were spiritually significant and the ecosystem of the shrine precincts.¹⁶ While it would perhaps be anachronistic to find in Usui and other mountain writers a spirit of environmental ethics in the contemporary sense, I believe that the implicit relationship between mountain writers and the

¹⁴ Schnell suggests a number of possibilities for this difference: that traditionally villagers viewed the mountain spirit who provided sustenance (in the form of irrigation) in return for respect and worship, while hunters and timber-cutters, who lived and worked on the mountains, saw the mountain god as more nurturing and benevolent; that the villagers, with their crops, houses, and belongings to think of had more to lose than the more rustic hunters; and finally, that the villagers may have suspected Weston of visiting the area in the interest of developing mines and profiting from their land, while the hunters saw an opportunity to profit themselves as guides and porters for the increased traffic to the mountain.

¹⁵ The rapid development of the Ashio Copper Mine starting in the 1870s resulted in an environmental disaster, including almost eradicating the fish population of the rivers downstream of the mine, flooding due to deforestation, and the destruction of fields because of industrial waste.

¹⁶ Beginning in 1906 the Meiji government began a program of merging smaller local shrines with larger regional ones, which would facilitate their control and support. By doing away with smaller shrines, the government could effectively stipend the remaining larger ones, overall improving the nation's system of shrines.

natural environment engendered a sensitivity to their surroundings, and my reading so far has revealed an emerging sense of conservation. Further research could clarify what relation this might have to the later development of more clearly articulated environmental ethics.

The above topics are only a few of the multitude of questions that arose during my research that I was unable to fully address in this dissertation. The research and writing for this project have been as much as anything an exercise in forbearance—resisting burrowing into the plentiful rabbit holes that each turn of the page presented as I progressed through Usui’s work. On one hand, it is with a sense of relief that I finish this project and submit it to my committee for review, allowing me to take at least a brief step away from Kojima Usui and the Meiji mountains. On the other hand, I am excited by the research possibilities I have uncovered along the way, and the opportunity to pursue some of the tangents I have had to set aside. I look forward to continuing my project of rediscovering the pioneers of Japanese mountaineering and mountain literature, blazing the trail for a renewed appreciation of their relevance and importance for contemporary Japanese literary studies.

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