

A Note from the Editor

Toru YAMADA

Museums are integral part of Tokyo's landscape. Approximately 30 percent of Japan's registered museums are in Tokyo Metropolitan area, and many of these are popular destinations both for domestic and international tourists. From collections of traditional Japanese artworks to scientific collections of parasites, many museums in Tokyo are more than just research institutions: they are often places of entertainment. Even though museums function to entertain, they primarily are expected to instruct. In this volume, Kazuo Komami takes us back to the time of Japan's Meiji Restoration and, by analyzing the Iwakura Mission Report from the early 1870s, critically presents conflicting opinions of the public officials on museum's role as "social infrastructure." Based on museum visits in North America and Europe, the government delegation provides their analysis of museum management with their opinions on Japaneseness and the didactic role of the museums in Japan.

While Komami analyzes the debates on Japan's modernization, Tomoko Ubukata critically examines the literary reaction after the end of Russo-Japanese War, often labelled as the point at which Japan caught up with the modern West. Despite the post-war triumph, it became tougher to be on an upward career path as high school admission became more competitive, and it also become difficult to get high level jobs. In such social uncertainty, the Japanese government implemented censorship on fantasy literature in order to control students' morale. The censorship was issued around the rise of naturalism in Japanese literature, and some popular writers publicly identified themselves as naturalists by claiming there were no fantasy components in their novels. However, against their disassociations, Ubukata points out that these "naturalist" writers still kept fantasy components in their writings via their use of children. These children in naturalist novels were the base of the revival of fantasy novels.