In 1912, a little-known book titled *Zaigo chūjō Narihira hishi* was published in Tokyo. The title might be translated as “The Secret History of the Ariwara Middle Captain Narihira,” but upon opening the book to the title page, one finds that the author, Kimura Takatarō, has given it his own rather extraordinary English rendering: *The Nestorian Priest of Ariwara, or ‘The Word Sent From God’ in Japanese History.* Kimura uses a linguistic analysis of *Ise monogatari* (Tales of Ise), the tenth-century classic of Japanese court literature, to prove that the work’s ostensible protagonist, the ninth-century poet-courtier Ariwara no Narihira (825–80), hailed originally from what is now Afghanistan, integrated Nestorianism with worship of the sun goddess Amaterasu, traveled through Asia from Taiwan to the Arabian Peninsula spreading his own “Narihira movement,” and brought the New Testament to the West from Japan.¹ The reader who stumbles across a gem such as this in a used bookstore might find herself barely able to flip the pages as her astonishment at the proceedings and their perversity increases. And yet, in his recondite approach to *Ise monogatari*, Kimura is in excellent company: his effort is merely one of the more outrageous examples in an eight-century-long exegetical tradition that is often inventive to the point of puzzling, rather than enlightening, a modern reader.

Literary Knowledge

*Ise monogatari* was established as a central text in the classical Japanese literary canon as early as the eleventh century and has remained one of the most widely read and highly influential texts in the tradition ever since. It has inspired generations of poets and artists, formed the basis of Noh and kabuki plays, been translated, adapted, and parodied in popular narrative, and exerted a great impact on Japanese aesthetics. However, the text has never lent itself to easy solutions to the questions of what it is and how it should be read. Forced to grapple with its numerous variants, mysterious origins, and idiosyncratic form—125 loosely connected episodes, each a taut balance of poetry and brief prose context, recounting the life and loves of an anonymous middle-ranking courtier who persistently evokes Ariwara no Narihira—successive generations of commentators have spilled staggering quantities of ink trying to aid others in understanding the text: along with *Genji monogatari* (The tale of Genji, ca. 1008) and the *Kokinwakashū* (Collection of old and new Japanese poems, 905; informally known as *Kokinshū*), it is one of the three most extensively studied and commented-upon works in Japanese literary history. But definitive solutions to its puzzles and readings of the text as a whole that are both compelling and comprehensive remain elusive.

I do not attempt to put forth a reading of *Ise monogatari*, definitive or otherwise, in these pages. Nor is it my goal to assess the persuasiveness or credibility of others’ views. Rather, the object of this study is to trace scholars’ use of *Ise monogatari* as a vehicle for advancing a variety of personal or institutional agendas that go beyond interpretation of the text. I am interested in how these scholars’ efforts serve to construct, transform, and transmit the literary and cultural value of the text, and shifts in those values over time, but the larger goal of my research is to define the contexts for these changes: to give a more comprehensive picture of the social networks and institutions within which literary scholarship was conducted and circulated, to identify the ideological and literary issues that drove and shaped scholars’ work, and to trace how scholastic institutions and methodologies evolved as the audience for classical literature expanded beyond aristocratic circles to include other social groups.

Focusing on *Ise monogatari* provides uniquely rich possibilities for a study of these phenomena. First, the difficulties that plague the text served to render it an all the more appealing playground within which commentators of various persuasions might ride their hobby horses with
abandon. The laconic ambiguity of *Ise monogatari*’s style and the obscurity in which its origins are shrouded engender a sometimes lavish inventiveness in the interpretations, in the course of which commentators tend to reveal more of what drives them than might otherwise be the case. Furthermore, the text’s relative brevity permits a thorough examination of a larger number of commentaries than would be possible with *Genji monogatari* or the *Kokinshū*, the other pillars of the premodern literary canon. Finally, the ambiguous generic status of *Ise monogatari*—a hybrid of fact and fiction, of poetry and prose—highlights the significance of genre to the conduct of literary scholarship and production of ideological value. Commentators’ perceptions of *Ise* as either factual or fictitious, and of the genre with which it is most closely aligned (history, fiction, or poetry collection), exerted a profound influence on the details they singled out for attention, their interpretation of those details, and their sense of *Ise*’s larger significance. Fiction was initially regarded with disdain or suspicion compared to more “serious” genres like history and poetry, and was criticized (particularly in the case of works like *Ise* and *Genji* that depict illicit amorous encounters) for its potential to lead readers into immoral behavior. Tracing shifts in the strategies through which early scholars grappled with issues of fictionality and moral value reveals the complex interactions among genre, ideology, and hermeneutics as these relate to assessments of the work’s value and to its status within the literary canon.

Commentary was the dominant mode of literary scholarship practiced on *Ise monogatari* in medieval and early modern Japan, and surviving commentaries are key sources through which to reconstruct the processes by which the value of *Ise monogatari* was produced and transmitted. Commentaries are valuable for their overtly dialogic quality: new commentaries were always produced with old commentaries on hand, and commentators defined themselves against the past, alternately confirming, expanding upon, and challenging earlier views in a way that renders both shifts and continuities easily discernible. Commentaries are also a site where the intersection of ideology and hermeneutics is clearly visible, where one can observe not only the impact ideology has on interpretation but also how commentators deliberately call attention to their methodological and interpretive innovations as a means of claiming legitimacy for themselves and contesting their predecessors’ or rivals’ authority.
Scholars generally divide premodern commentaries on *Ise monogatari* into three groups.\(^2\) The Old Commentaries (*kochūshaku*) are secret transmissions compiled by Kamakura and early Muromachi-period *waka* poets who viewed *Ise monogatari* as disguised historical fact, the life story of the ninth-century poet and courtier Ariwara no Narihira couched in various fictions, and who saw their task as recreating the “truth” behind the fiction even where there was no truth to be found. The Transitional Commentaries\(^3\) (or “Older Commentaries,” *kyūchūshaku*), beginning with Ichijō Kaneyoshi’s *Ise monogatari gukenshō* (1460), are the work of fifteenth- through seventeenth-century *waka*, *renge*, and *haikai* poets who rejected the more fanciful excesses of their predecessors but persisted in viewing *Ise monogatari* as at least partly rooted in the facts of Narihira’s life. I divide the Transitional Commentaries further into an early (late medieval) group and a late (early modern) group, with the beginning of the seventeenth century as the dividing line. This mark corresponds not only to the political shift that took place with the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate; it is also the point when manuscript culture gave way to a combination of manuscript and print, as well as the starting point for other substantial social and cultural changes that altered the ways in which commentaries were produced and packaged, even though the interpretations put forth in the commentaries changed little until the late seventeenth century. Finally, the New Commentaries (*shinchūshaku*), beginning with Keichū’s *Seigo okudan* (1693), are mostly the work of scholars associated with the *kokugaku* (national learning, or nativism) movement of the mid to late Edo period, who viewed earlier commentaries skeptically and brought more rigorous scholarly methods to bear on the text, opening it to fresh interpretations.

A handful of studies that deal partly with premodern *Ise monogatari* commentaries have already appeared in English. Richard Bowring’s sweeping “The *Ise monogatari*: A Short Cultural History,” a journal

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2. See Ōtsu, *Ise monogatari kochūshaku*, p. 25. Ōtsu, one of the pioneers in studying the commentaries on a large scale, is the first to make the division this way. Although some refer to the commentaries by political period (Kamakura, Muromachi, Edo), Ōtsu’s scheme has the distinct advantage of grouping the commentaries by shared approach as well as approximate chronology, thereby accommodating the fact that *kochū*-style commentaries continued to be produced through the mid-Muromachi period, and *kyūchū*-style commentaries well into the Tokugawa.

3. I am borrowing Susan Klein’s usage here.
article published in 1992, discusses premodern *Ise* scholarship together with the text’s transformations in illustrations, in Noh, in *otogizōshi*, in Edo-period parodies, and so on. More recently, Susan Klein’s *Allegories of Desire: Esoteric Literary Commentaries of Medieval Japan* (2002) gives a meticulous treatment of key Old Commentaries on *Ise* as well as on the *Kokinshū*, analyzing their use of allegoresis as an interpretive strategy and placing them in historical context. She has also produced a full translation and introduction of *Ise monogatari zuinō* (1997–98), a work that is closely related to the Old Commentaries, and her Ph.D. dissertation, “Allegories of Desire: Kamakura Commentaries and the Noh” (1994), describes the impact of the Old Commentaries on several Noh plays based on sections of *Ise*.4

These studies rely on the work of Katagiri Yōichi, whose seminal *Ise monogatari no kenkyū* (1968–69) inaugurated in-depth study of the commentaries, principally the Old Commentaries, as a window on *Ise monogatari*’s reception. Two additional book-length studies had appeared earlier. Ōtsu Yūichi’s indispensable *Ise monogatari kochūshaku no kenkyū* (1954; updated in 1986) introduces 138 commentaries, ranging from the Kamakura period through the end of the Tokugawa period, with information about the authors and variant texts as well as brief samples from each commentary. The approach is bibliographic rather than interpretive, but the book serves as an excellent guide nonetheless. Tanaka Sōsaku’s *Ise monogatari kenkyūshi no kenkyū* (1965) is valuable for its focus on Tokugawa-period commentaries (both late Transitional Commentaries and New Commentaries), including discussion of many that are not available in modern printed editions.

Despite this activity in the 1950s and 1960s, though, and a subsequent “commentary boom” that developed in the 1970s and 1980s and continues to this day, making many more texts available in printed editions and yielding numerous articles on textual problems that surround individual commentaries, it is only in the past twenty-five years or so that analytical or critical articles about the commentaries have begun to appear with any frequency, and, no doubt owing to Katagiri’s path-breaking work, the coverage has tended to be slanted toward medieval

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4. In addition to these, see Vos, *A Study of the Ise-monogatari*, pp. 101–15, for a helpful survey in English of important premodern commentaries.
commentaries. Yamamoto Tokurō and Aoki Shizuko have both produced significant bodies of work, particularly on the mainstream Transitional Commentaries, on which my discussion will rely heavily, but apart from Tanaka, scholars in Japan have tended to ignore or dismiss later Transitional Commentaries, many of which were produced for unsophisticated nonscholarly audiences after the advent of commercial publishing in the seventeenth century, and no fully integrated account of even the mainstream commentaries of this group has yet appeared. By the same token, there is relatively little scholarship on the New Commentaries of nativist scholars (again, with the exception of Tanaka’s work), partly because study of kokugaku in Japan is dominated by historians rather than kokubungaku (national literature studies) scholars, partly because nativist scholars’ work on Ise appears tangential or secondary within their respective corpuses, and partly, I believe, because these commentaries seem either too accessible—a number of them were still found to be as useful as contemporary commentaries well into the modern period—to merit study at arm’s length or, conversely, too far out in ideological left field to be treated as more than idiosyncratic tirades. But whatever the reasons, research on nativists’ work on Ise, when it exists, is most often undertaken as part of the study of the respective nativist scholar’s work as a whole, not as part of a study of Ise commentaries or of Ise’s reception generally. My work seeks to bridge some of these gaps, by providing a more comprehensive, integrated history of the Transitional and New Commentaries, with particular attention to shifts in the way the study of literary texts is conceptualized, to issues of openness and secrecy, to the forms in which works of scholarship circulated, and to the genre issues that very often drive the commentators’ interpretations.

5. Much of Yamamoto’s earlier work is conveniently gathered in Yamamoto, Ise monogatari ron, and he has also very recently spearheaded a number of edited volumes gathering together new work on Ise reception (not limited to discussion of commentaries) by a wide range of scholars. See particularly Yamamoto, ed., Ise monogatari: Kyōju no tenkai, and Yamamoto and Mostow, eds., Ise monogatari: Sōzō to hen’yō.

6. Yamamoto has taken the first steps toward rectifying this gap as well, in the form of Ise monogatari hanpon shūsei, a large volume of photographic reproductions of popular early modern woodblock-printed books together with vast amounts of bibliographical information. Unfortunately, because this book appeared as the present volume was in the final stages of preparation, it has not been possible to incorporate the wealth of new information here.
Literary Knowledge

The title of this book, *Knowing the Amorous Man*, is intended to evoke both the central questions about *Ise monogatari* that taxed medieval and early modern exegetes, and the framework that supports this study. As the strange case of Kimura Takatarō suggests, the figure of Ariwara no Narihira, *Ise*’s presumptive protagonist, very often becomes the bearer of larger burdens of meaning, such that knowing what *Ise monogatari* means becomes an extension of knowing Narihira—reconstructing what is true of him historically or biographically; explicating what is true of him literarily, as he is presented in *Ise monogatari*; accounting for (or effacing) gaps between these two Narihira-constructions; and at the same time, elucidating the significance of his supposed “amorousness.” In the course of tackling these issues and others, commentators produce and transmit not only new knowledge, but new strategies of knowing. Devising appropriate, effective ways to conduct historical inquiries, to analyze and interpret the text and its language, to create coherence, and to extract moral lessons or aesthetic principles—all of these are deeply implicated in commentators’ activities.

To underscore these strategies, throughout this study I view the material put forth in commentaries on *Ise monogatari* as sociohistorically situated instantiations of “literary knowledge.” I take literary knowledge to be just one specialized type of knowledge among the plurality of knowledges that might, in Norbert Elias’s phrase, function as a “means of orientation” in a given society or group, and that range from practical everyday knowledge to abstract, theoretical scientific or philosophical knowledge. As I am interested in how literary knowledge changes over a long period of time, my working definition is necessarily loose: transmitted, more or less systematized information considered necessary to appreciate or utilize a belle-lettristic piece of writing in a particular sociohistorical setting; in other words, the information or competencies beyond mere literacy that a reader needs in order to perform as a skilled reader within a particular milieu. Needless to say, there is considerable overlap between literary knowledge in this sense and other kinds of knowledge. To enable readers to engage “correctly” with *Ise monogatari*,

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for example, commentators introduce historical knowledge, knowledge of Heian-period customs, Buddhist and Confucian knowledge, and so on, but insofar as these other knowledges are being applied to or extrapolated from *Ise monogatari*, in the context of an *Ise* commentary they function concurrently as literary knowledge.8

As the terms of the foregoing definition suggest, I am construing literary knowledge from a specifically, perhaps narrowly, social, transactional point of view, involving a party (or text) who produces, packages, and transmits knowledge, and a second party, implied or actual, who receives it. I am not, for current purposes, interested in epistemological questions, such as how we can know what a literary work means or determine what interpretations are valid, what special kinds of knowledge (about the human condition, about language, and so on) are extricable from literary works and how they may be retrieved, or what constitutes a work as “literary” in the first place. Although these are certainly valid and fascinating lines of inquiry, they fall outside the purview of this study. My own concerns are in the following questions: How was literary knowledge conceptualized in medieval and early modern Japan? How was it produced and controlled, and by whom? On what did its producers base their claims to authority? Who wanted literary knowledge and for what purposes? Through what channels and in what forms did literary knowledge circulate?

At any particular point in time, the answers to these questions are closely interrelated and may be thought of as forming a complex structure, what we might, following Pierre Bourdieu, view as a distinct area within the larger field of cultural production. In Bourdieu’s work, a field is a social space wherein agents (in this case, producers and disseminators) vie to maximize their reputations, influence, and authority, changing the structure of the field itself with every move they make in relation to each other. In Bourdieu’s own words,

> the initiative of change falls on the newcomers . . . who are also those least endowed with specific capital; in a universe in which to exist is to differ, i.e., to occupy a distinct, distinctive position, they must assert their

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8. By the same token, one might find aspects of literary knowledge deployed in commentaries on other kinds of texts, as when metaphor or parables are discussed in a commentary on a Buddhist sutra.
difference, get it known and recognized, get themselves known and recognized (“make a name for themselves”), by endeavouring to impose new modes of thought and expression, out of key with the prevailing modes of thought and with the doxa, and therefore bound to disconcert the orthodox by their “obscurity” and “pointlessness.” The fact remains that every new position, in asserting itself as such, determines a displacement of the whole structure and that, by the logic of action and reaction, it leads to all sorts of changes in the position-takings of the occupants of the other positions.9

At the same time,

When the newcomers are not disposed to enter the cycle of simple reproduction, based on recognition of the “old” by the “young”—homage, celebration, etc.—and recognition of the “young” by the “old”—prefaces, co-optation, consecration, etc.—but bring with them dispositions and position-takings which clash with the prevailing norms of production and the expectations of the field, they cannot succeed without the help of external changes. These may be political breaks, such as revolutionary crises, which change the power relations within the field . . . or deep-seated changes in the audience of consumers who, because of their affinity with the new producers, ensure the success of their products.10

The model is thus particularly useful for elucidating the changes that took place in the production, consumption, and circulation of premodern Japanese literary scholarship across critical historical junctures such as the Ōnin War and the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate—times when social and political upheaval led to new relationships between producers and consumers and new patterns of dissemination.

Conceptions of what literary knowledge entails also change over time, hand in hand with the methods employed to produce it. Some issues that were of particular, pervasive interest to the commentators discussed herein include:

- explanations of a work’s title
- attempts to identify authors and the time of writing
- textual history and evaluation of variant texts
- glosses of obscure vocabulary

10. Ibid., pp. 57–58.
• identification of omitted grammatical subjects
• tracing allusions to earlier works, particularly to poetry, or discussion of later poems that refer back to the text under discussion \((bikiuta)\)
• explanations of relevant court protocol and precedent \((yūsoku kojitsu)\)
• identification of anonymous characters or poets as historical personages
• reading conventions \((yomikuse)\)
• explications of poems
• critical evaluation of poems, or of prose passages
• acceptance or rejection of previous or other schools’ interpretations
• discussions of genre
• narratological observations (regarding narrators’ intrusions, and so on)
• extraction of moral lessons, with or without support from secondary sources
• methodological issues and assertions
• conventions or practices pertaining to the transmission of information (how to begin or end a lecture; references to the existence of secret teachings; etc.)

Many of these concerns, of course, persist to this day. Open any volume of one of the standard modern editions of a premodern classic, and one of the first things to appear in its kaisetsu (explanatory essay) will be a discussion of the title and author, while the notes brim with allusions, definitions, and historical background. However, even when the conclusions are similar, differences in the methods employed to arrive at them and the sources of their authority (distinct but often related questions) can lead to fundamental differences in their significance. Something as simple as a statement about whether a particular consonant should be voiced or unvoiced, for example, may prove to have very different implications when it is made by a late medieval scholar versus an early modern scholar. The late medieval scholar’s assertion will very often derive from a traditional reading convention handed down from some past luminary in the poetic tradition, acceptance of which identifies the receiving party as an adherent of a particular school. An early modern scholar, meanwhile, would more likely base his conclusion on philological research that he is at pains to explain in his commentary as a means of justifying the break he makes with the views of earlier, established commentators.

Literary knowledge has significance beyond its content (the specifics about which producer-agents contend and the methods through which they justify their conclusions), however. It also functions as a form of
cultural capital for both producers and consumers, albeit in different ways. Producers rely on other forms of symbolic capital—designation as heir in a scholarly family, possession of or access to authoritative texts, initiation into secret teachings, connections with well-placed (wealthy or powerful) students, acquisition of a popular following, possession of an advanced degree, to name a few possibilities—to legitimize their status as producers and disseminators of knowledge, while possession of legitimate status in turn “consecrates” the knowledge itself and reconstitutes it as yet another source of symbolic capital for the producer. Although their methods, practices, and sources of authority vary widely, a fifteenth-century renga master, an eighteenth-century nativist scholar, and a twenty-first-century Japanese literature professor are all engaged in this process of converting their own acquired capital into knowledge and thence into new capital for themselves and for others. The output of each is inextricably linked, on one hand, to the institutional configurations in which they operate and the positions they take in relation to other players in the field, and on the other hand, to the specific character and needs of their target audiences. Consumers, meanwhile, come to desire literary knowledge based on the possibility of converting it into other kinds of capital (social, economic, political, and so forth). A medieval courtier might seek to be recognized as a skilled poet, and thence to attract the attention or patronage of superiors. An early modern woman might wish to demonstrate cultural literacy and sophistication in order to enhance her marriage prospects. And a twenty-first-century student might seek no more or less than to pass a college entrance examination, or to fulfill requirements for a degree that will lead to gainful employment. A principal goal of this study is to trace the history of premodern Japanese literary scholarship, as revealed specifically in scholarship on Ise monogatari, with attention to the interconnectedness of consumers’ needs, producers’ distinguishing strategies, and the content of literary knowledge in a complex, constantly shifting structure.

Secrecy and Openness

A distinctive feature of premodern Japanese literary scholarship and another broad concern of this study is the use of secrecy to manage the circulation and thence the value (social, economic, and otherwise) of literary knowledge. Medieval scholars, taking their cue from esoteric
Buddhism, maintained more or less elaborate systems of teachings that were made available only to select initiates. During the early modern period, however, these practices fell into disuse outside court circles: the “culture of secrecy” gave way to one of increasing openness, and to dramatic changes in the way literary knowledge was produced and consumed. The beginning of the shift corresponds loosely to the advent of commercial publishing in the seventeenth century, but it is a great oversimplification to imagine that publishing alone destroyed the authority or prestige of secret knowledge. Residual interest in secret teachings persisted to the end of the early modern period, and proponents of “openness,” such as nativist scholars, as newcomers to the field, were by no means in a position to create new norms without considerable struggle.

Although Chapter 3 below examines in some detail the content of a particular set of secret teachings on *Ise monogatari*, I am more generally interested in secrecy as “essentially a boundary mechanism separating members of different social categories or groups. . . . the content of the secret is often insignificant compared to the rights, obligations and privileges generated by the fact of secrecy.”¹¹ For medieval Japanese literary scholars and poets, possession of legitimately obtained secret knowledge served to distinguish insiders from outsiders and at the highest levels conveyed the authority to reproduce and transmit knowledge within a school, as well as to earn money from doing so. Therefore, even when the specifics of the secrets remain unknown, as is the case with many late medieval secret teachings about *Ise monogatari*, the fact of a commentator having occupied a position in a transmission lineage implies a great deal about that commentator’s status and modus operandi:

Secrecy . . . is better understood, not in terms of its content or substance . . . but rather in terms of its forms or strategies—the tactics by which social agents conceal or reveal, hoard or exchange, certain valued information. In this sense, secrecy is a discursive strategy that transforms a given piece of knowledge into a scarce and precious resource, a valuable commodity, the possession of which in turn bestows status, prestige, or symbolic capital on its owner.¹²

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Secrecy thus becomes an effective method to manage the value, economic and otherwise, of knowledge. Late medieval scholars might lecture on a particular text and allow notes (kikigaki) to be taken, but they maintained parallel stores of secret knowledge (hiden or denju) that were transmitted only orally (kuden) or in separate memoranda (kirigami). It is important to note that knowledge, whether secret or widely known, does not function exactly as a commodity.¹³ Unlike a measure of rice, knowledge does not cease to be possessed by whomever transmits it, even after it has been transferred to another party—it is capable of being transmitted repeatedly, and attempts to control its transmission may be necessary to preserve its value. Access to secret knowledge typically required the consent and cooperation of the scholar who held it, as well as the signing of oaths forbidding retransmission, and perhaps participation in an initiation ceremony. If acquired without involvement in the full process, the knowledge was essentially valueless. Mark Teeuwen makes a helpful distinction in this regard between “knowing” a secret and “owning” it:

Secrets are a function of a complicated set of official rules of transmission. These rules signalize that the secret in question is the property of a specific lineage. “Secret” appears here to mean “that which is to be transmitted within a lineage,” rather than “that which is to be hidden.” Even when the knowledge that is declared secret is not physically removed from the public realm, it still retains a special status in the sense that only those who have gained it in the “proper” way, through an initiation within the right lineage, have the authority to use it. A person who has studied the Tōmitsu secrets in the library, or who has overheard them in a temple, has no legitimacy as a priest—just as a person who has read a medical handbook is not allowed to practice as a doctor.¹⁴

The content of secret knowledge is thus only one component of the arrangement that ensured the authority of both the producer-transmitter and the knowledge itself.

Early modern thinkers famously deplored the existence of secret teachings and initiated the movement toward openness. Matsunaga Teitoku (1571–1653), for example, a commoner who had studied under several aristocrats but who had not been permitted to receive secret teachings,

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gave public lectures on *Tsurezuregusa* (Essays in idleness, ca. 1331) as early as 1603, much to the consternation of his patrons. Teitoku was no revolutionary—he initiated the transmission of the so-called *jige denju* (commoner *denju*) based on what he had learned from courtiers—but the concern he evinced throughout his long career for educating members of his own class who sought knowledge of the classical literary tradition makes him a key transitional figure. Nativist scholars’ hostility to secret teachings, particularly to the *kokin denju* (secret teachings of the *Kokinshū*) was far less equivocal. In *Kokka hachiron* (Eight theses on national poetry, 1742), Kada no Arimaro expresses a typical nativist view:

Approaching recent times, something called the *kokin denju* came into being. To understand writings, one compares them to other writings and adds one’s own ideas. There is no other method. What sort of transmission could there be? Moreover, since the *Kokinshū* is simply a collection of poetry, how can there be meaning created from anything beyond the words of the poems? Therefore, from antiquity onward, there was no field in the study of poetry known as the *kokin denju*. It was probably created spuriously by Tō no Tsuneyori and spread by the monk Sōgi. Sōgi, who supposedly received the transmission, lectured on the *Kokinshū*, and when you look at the works of Hosokawa Yūsai, who explicated *Ise monogatari*, *Hyakunin isshu*, and *Eiga no taigai*, from beginning to end there is not a single word among the explanations that one should look up to and accept. With their scanty knowledge they arbitrarily believed groundless ideas.

Arimaro rejects the *kokin denju* essentially on methodological grounds. Knowledge about poetry must in his view be generated directly from examining texts; tradition and transmission lineage become irrelevant.

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15. The *kokin denju* is a body of secret knowledge pertaining to the *Kokinshū* (and to some extent to *Ise monogatari* and other texts) that originated in lectures given by Tō no Tsuneyori to the *renga* master Sōgi in the fifteenth century. Sōgi subsequently transmitted the teachings to courtiers of the Sanjōnishi and Konoe families, as well as to his disciple Shōhaku. The teachings continued to be transmitted in court circles through the end of the Tokugawa period.

16. A warrior and poet with close ties to the court, Yūsai (1534–1610) received the *kokin denju* from the Sanjōnishi family and became a key figure in the establishment of both court *denju* and commoner *denju* in the Tokugawa period.

as a basis of authority. The argument is part of a larger project of discrediting the court-associated scholars for whom a monopoly on literary knowledge was a birthright and of creating a space wherein commoners too might be accepted as legitimate interpreters of the classical literary tradition.

Secret teachings nonetheless retained a powerful hold on the popular imagination, and some of Arimaro’s and other nativists’ vehemence can perhaps be attributed to the fact that they were fighting a decidedly uphill battle. From the Genroku period (1688–1704), continuing through the eighteenth century, a truly astounding array of supposedly secret knowledge begins to appear among booksellers’ wares. Many had to do with poetry, but books were also published on secrets of cooking, Noh chanting, go playing, letter writing, and, separately, letter folding. There are published secrets of medicine, military strategy, feminine deportment, China, bureaucracy, carpentry, good health, acting, biwa playing, kana usage, incense making, sericulture, archery, jōruri, drumming, dance, and moxabustion. There are books identified as “mirrors” of secret transmissions, “pillows” of secret transmissions, “bags” of secret transmissions, and “illustrated bags” of secret transmissions. The titles of these books echo the language of medieval denju culture, using words like hishō, hiden, kikigaki, and kirigami. But even in cases where “real” secrets were being published, there is a crucial difference: there is no master-disciple relationship, no transmission ritual. The knowledge might for all practical purposes have been bought and sold earlier, but never would a serious secret have been transmitted outside a personal relationship, without lectures exchanged and oaths signed, and so on. In the early modern period, however, this knowledge did in fact become merely a commodity: the supposedly secret knowledge was displayed openly on the shelf, accessible to anyone who had the necessary cash. With the practices stripped away, an essential part of the value is lost, and all that remains is rhetoric, a marketing strategy.

Commentaries, Canons, and Books

Commentary is the dominant form in which exegesis was practiced not only in premodern Japan, but in premodern societies across the globe—the most common scholarly response to the problems inherent in
interpreting and assimilating a valued classic in a time long enough after its formation that it cannot be understood as is.\textsuperscript{18} Although we might view a wide range of texts and genres as “commentaries” on other works—a Noh play, a parody, a translation, even a painting may serve as a “comment” on \textit{Ise monogatari}—in this study I use the term in the restrictive sense of writing that attempts to clarify a particular base text section by section, line by line, sometimes even word by word, often, though not always, sharing the written or printed page with the base text. Because the structure of a commentary derives from the structure of the base text, dealing with problems as they come up, commentaries do not typically present an organized, coherent argument about a given text. Rather, larger agendas must be reconstructed from an examination of patterns in the scattered annotations, adduced from extratextual evidence, or glimpsed in seemingly offhand remarks. Even when a commentary includes a preface addressing general matters, one often finds that what the author of a commentary says he is going to do diverges significantly from what he actually does.

John Makeham, writing of Confucian commentary, describes a pervasive weakness in the way commentaries tend to be approached:

I would suggest that most readers today tend to regard the commentary as an accessory, supplement or even vestige, the significance of which is defined by that of the text and subordinate to it. We accept the text as an integral whole but we pick and choose which passages of commentary to adopt and ignore the rest. . . . Consequently we have tended not to appreciate sufficiently that many commentaries do more than simply comment on a text: often passages of text serve as pretexts for the commentator to develop and expound his own body of thought.\textsuperscript{19}

Despite what might initially appear to be a sort of formal rigidity deriving from the inseparability of a commentary from its base text, the commentary form is actually extremely fluid: the lack of any imperative to produce a coherent, overarching argument makes the form very amenable to digressions and detours, and it is often these junctures, seemingly tangential to the task at hand, that reveal the most about what underlies the commentators’ readings. Commentaries are thus an unparalleled

\textsuperscript{18} Henderson, \textit{Scripture, Canon and Commentary}, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{19} Makeham, \textit{Transmitters and Creators}, pp. 2–3.
source of information not only about history of a particular text’s reception—a rare opportunity to see readers of bygone ages in action—but also about the broader issues and conventions that motivate commentators’ reading practices and shape their conclusions.

Among the things that dictate how commentaries work, perhaps the most basic derive from beliefs about the nature of canonical texts and of canons as a whole. In his comparative study of Confucian commentary and various Western commentarial traditions—Christian biblical exegesis, Qu’ranic exegesis, and rabbinical Judaism, as well as Vedânta—John Henderson identifies a number of “commentarial assumptions” that govern how canonical texts are approached in these otherwise divergent traditions:

1. The canon is comprehensive and all-encompassing.
2. The canon is well-ordered and coherent, arranged according to some logical, cosmological or pedagogical principle.
3. The canon is self-consistent; internal contradictions in it are only apparent.

These coexist with assumptions about the works that comprise the canon:

a. The classics are moral.
b. The classics are profound.
c. The classics contain nothing superfluous or insignificant.
d. The classics are clear and accessible.20

These assumptions are reflected not only in commentaries on scriptural canons, but also on some literary canons or works.21 Differences may arise, however, according to the nature of the particular canon. As Haruo Shirane points out, although scriptural canons are generally stable and closed, literary canons are in constant flux.22 Thus, they are less likely to be subject to assumptions about comprehensiveness, for example. We do

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20. For detailed discussion of each of these propositions, see Henderson, Scripture, Canon and Commentary, pp. 89–138.
21. Henderson discusses commentary on Homer, though he identifies the epics as quasi-scriptural. Other literary examples may be found in Baswell, Virgil in Medieval England, and Parker, Commentary and Ideology, showing that commentaries on The Aeneid and The Divine Comedy have characteristic encyclopedic qualities and appear to approach the texts with the assumption that they are moral, profound, and so forth.
not generally find late medieval scholars in Japan mining *Genji* and *Ise* for information about how to govern a state or what happens after death (though we do find broader concerns in the work of Confucian and nativist scholars). Many of the other assumptions, however—that the canon is somehow orderly, that apparent inconsistencies in it can be resolved, that classics are moral, that they are deeply and entirely meaningful, that (with the aid of a commentator) they are accessible—hold in the case of *Ise monogatari* commentaries of all periods and go a long way toward illuminating the sometimes strenuous gymnastics commentators engage in to reconfigure aspects of the text that seem to defy these assumptions.

On the other hand, there are important issues for which Henderson’s analysis does not entirely account. Commentaries do not arise in a closed room containing just a text and a commentator; external political and social pressures influence their production and content as well. A particular commentator’s sense of morality, for example, may derive from sources other than the canon itself or may rely upon a reconstitution of the canon. At the same time, commentaries can themselves become canonized and thereby set or restrict the agendas of subsequent commentaries.

It is also essential to consider the social aspects of commentaries. I would argue that commentaries, in all cases, are not merely collections of an individual’s or institution’s interpretations; they are traces of interpersonal transactions wherein a party with some claim to authority, stated or implicit, attempts to enlighten, persuade, or indoctrinate a reader or group of readers (or auditors), while shoring up and sometimes ritually transmitting that authority. In short, commentaries are intimately connected to the power relations within or among various scholastic institutions, by virtue of both the distinctive knowledge they contain and the practices surrounding their production and transmission. Commentaries must thus be considered not only as part of the reception of the base text, but also in terms of their own reception history, their projected and actual effects on their intended (and unintended) audiences.

This history is inseparable from the material form of the commentary. In the simplest case, a commentary may consist simply of notes jotted in the margins or between the lines of a previously existing copy of the base text, representing either the jotter’s reactions to the text itself or the results of his or her engagement with another commentary. In
other cases, a commentary may begin as a student’s notes on lectures given by some authority, which may later be recopied and certified by the lecturer as a faithful transcription of the lecture, and then be circulated selectively to others. Alternately, authorities may produce commentaries of their own, with preconceived intentions regarding the breadth of the texts’ circulation. Commentaries may be prepared in manuscript for the sake of having them printed but might also come to be printed irrespective of the original intention. In short, the form the commentary takes on the written or printed page and the process through which it attained that form contains its own wealth of information that must be accounted for when attempting to situate its interpretations of the base text.

Such information often appears prominently in what Gerard Genette calls “paratexts,” defined as “what enables a text to become a book, and to be offered as such to its readers,” or more specifically,

verbal or other productions, such as an author’s name, a title, a preface, illustrations. . . . although we do not always know whether these productions are to be regarded as belonging to the text, in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to present it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to make present, to ensure the text’s presence in the world, its “reception” and consumption in the form (nowadays, at least) of a book.  

Of course, commentary can itself be viewed as a paratext of the work it elucidates, depending on its presentation—as a secondary appendage to the base text, as in the case of popular early modern printed commentaries on *Ise monogatari*, rather than as the primary focus of the book or manuscript that “presents” it, as in the case of most of the other commentaries considered below. But other paratextual features, such as prefaces, colophons, publisher’s postscripts, and such, some of which attract scant attention when commentaries are analyzed and discussed, will be examined closely in this study for what they reveal about the commentaries’ origins and intended uses. Issues of material form and composition will be particularly prominent in my discussion of early modern Transitional Commentaries, but this entire study is informed by a view of commentaries as objects whose material (or in the case of oral transmissions,

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virtual) form, including its paratexts or “presentation,” is determined by, and therefore reveals, distinctive social or institutional relations.

**Genre and Interpretation**

Because genre issues are central to a consideration of *Ise monogatari’s* place in Japanese literary history and appropriation for various purposes by literary scholars, a few words are in order about the concept as it will figure hereinafter. The generic classification of a literary work is both a precondition for and a consequence of critical intervention. Such classification may be considered a sub-operation (or super-operation) of the hermeneutic circle whereby one cannot understand a work as a whole without understanding its constituent parts, yet cannot understand the parts without knowledge of the whole. A commentator reasoning about a text, whether in broad outline or in fine detail, is hard-pressed to avoid making generic assumptions, even if these assumptions remain implicit. At the same time, genre classifications are closely linked to a work’s canonicity or lack thereof.

In the simplest case, genre may be defined from a productive or normative point of view, as a set of existing conventions or rules to which a writer adheres or that he or she flouts. Though the reasons may differ, this definition is valid for both traditional genres and contemporary popular genres: a classical *waka* poem, for example, must have 31 syllables arranged in phrases of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7; it must use a limited range of classical diction, it is composed on a limited range of appropriate topics, and so on. A mass-market romance novel is typically a prose narrative that proceeds from a meeting of two members of the opposite sex through a set of complications to a happy ending, usually in the form of a wedding. The conventions may change over time as tastes change—a *waka* from the *Shinkokinshū* (New collection of old and new poetry, 1205) uses self-consciously decorous diction, but one from the *Man’yōshū* (Collection of ten thousand leaves, after 759) does not necessarily do so; a short paperback romance from the 1970s is likely to be set in an exotic location, whereas one from the 1990s is not—but at any particular moment in time, the rules exist within a particular range, driven, explicitly or not, by the community of producers (including compilers, publishers, and such, as well as writers), and sometimes influenced by their sense of audiences’ tastes. Deviations that fall wildly outside that range (a *waka*
with 37 syllables; a romance novel that ends with a nasty divorce) effectively exclude the work from the category.24

Such categories also have distinct implications for readers and critics: they provide a scheme against which the work might be read and evaluated. As Fredric Jameson notes,

Genres are essentially literary institutions, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact. . . . Still, as texts free themselves more and more from an immediate performance situation it becomes more difficult to enforce a given generic rule on their readers. No small part of the art of writing, indeed, is absorbed by this (impossible) attempt to devise a foolproof mechanism for the exclusion of undesirable responses to a given literary utterance.25

Jameson is writing specifically about modern genres, but his observation has important implications for genres approached at a significant temporal remove from the “immediate performance situation.” A modern reader might recognize a waka as such immediately because of its prosody, but a historicized reading is dependent upon understanding and accepting the other conventions that originally governed their composition.

However, not all works in the universe of writing are susceptible to normative, producer-oriented classification. Other generic classifications are imposed on works long after they are written, in ways that the writer would not likely have anticipated, and these are necessarily fluid. Sei Shōnagon was not in a position to know that she was writing a “miscellany” (zuihitsu) when she wrote out her stories, observations, and lists in Makura no sōshi (The pillow book, ca. 1000), and as far as Daniel Defoe was concerned, Moll Flanders was a (fraudulent) “history”; only later would it be considered a novel, or not quite a novel, depending on the critic. Even though Ise monogatari’s poetry is naturally interpretable according to the norms of the (producer-oriented) waka category, the work as a whole emphatically does not fall into such a category. We have no idea what Ise’s authors thought they were producing, and indeed, reading it is in many ways no more or less than a process of trying to pin it down to some, or any, generic baseline for interpretation.

24. See Radway, Reading the Romance, p. 99, for evidence pertaining to the latter case.
Needless to say, reader- and critic-generated classifications are informed by agendas that diverge significantly from producer-generated ones—the former classifications are not “social institutions,” or contracts between writers and their audiences. The critic generally classifies in order to produce a narrative of some sort, or to fit a work into an existing narrative, to establish resemblances and distinctions among the works in a given set (canon) or to trace the development of forms over time. The implications become clear when, for example, instead of accepting that some sort of miscellany-ness is immanent in *Makura no sōshi*, one wonders, would we have needed to specify that Sei Shōnagon wrote a miscellany if Yoshida Kenkō had not adopted a similar form for his *Tsurezuregusa* after her, or would we be content to say she had written a pillow book? Or would we think of it as a literary diary (*nikki*) plus alpha? Without *Tsurezuregusa*, forming a bridge between recluse writing and fragmentary prose writing, would it have occurred to anyone to put the far more coherent, essayistic *Hōjōki* (An account of a 10-foot-square hut, 1212) in the same category as *Makura no sōshi*?26

Thomas O. Beebee makes a valuable observation that encompasses both producer- and critic-oriented genre designations, namely, that contrary to appearances, “genre is a system of differences without positive terms.”27 His analogy is to Saussurean principles of linguistics, whereby sounds and words can be understood only in opposition to similar sounds or words.

Rock and not country, folk and not rock: to say a work’s genre is to say what it is not. Rather than seeing fiction as something in and of itself, we judge it by its nonrelatedness to the world, by the nonillocutionary force of its speech acts. The novel is a kind of biography which does not allow us to sue. Oddly, though, when we go to name fiction’s opposite, the only general term we have for it (in English), “nonfiction” also denotes a lack. It is this lack, rather than a presence, which “establishes” the genre, like the double lack that established the genre of the prose poem. The systemic nature of genre foils formalist studies, because formalism is limited to describing what is “there” in the texts, whereas any generic

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26. See Chance, *Formless in Form*, pp. 25–35 and 176–79, for a useful discussion of these issues.
reading of a text is based equally on what is not there, on what the text
does not say, and ultimately on what cannot be done with it.\textsuperscript{28}

This observation proves to be of great consequence in the case of \textit{Ise monogatari}, poised as it is in the borderlands of better established genres. Premodern scholars almost always performed the operation of fixing it on one side or the other of the divide between fact and fiction by referring to other works: many note that it is not factually trustworthy like the \textit{Kokinshū} (which itself is viewed not merely as a collection of poetry but also, to the extent that it gives the names of poets and occasions on which poems were composed, as a historical record, as well as a repository of what we might call “poetic truth”), whereas others note the way it resembles, yet does not resemble, the more unambiguously fictional \textit{Genji monogatari}. Even the \textit{uta monogatari} (poem-tale) category devised to give \textit{Ise monogatari} a home of its own in the Meiji period does not positively single out \textit{monogatari} that include poems—all classical \textit{monogatari} include poems—so much as it identifies \textit{Ise} and the other works in the category as \textit{monogatari} that lack narrative continuity, and instead proceed as a collection of at best loosely connected vignettes or episodes.\textsuperscript{29}

The term \textit{monogatari} poses considerable problems of its own. Typically translated as “tale,” in itself the word means simply “talking about things”; it identifies a work as a vernacular (\textit{kana}) narrative, but nothing further. Later scholars and critics established a variety of subdivisions. The \textit{Nihon koten bungaku daijiten} (Dictionary of classical Japanese literature), for example, identifies seven subtypes: \textit{denki monogatari} (tale of marvels), \textit{uta monogatari} (poem-tale), \textit{tsukuri monogatari} (fictional tale), \textit{rekishi monogatari} (historical tale), \textit{gunki monogatari} (military tale), \textit{setsuwa monogatari} (exemplum), and \textit{giko monogatari} (tale written in imitation of older tales). This classification scheme is far from systematic or

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., p. 263.

\textsuperscript{29} Submerged within the definition and complicating it is the notion that, unlike \textit{Genji} and other purely fictional \textit{monogatari}, \textit{uta monogatari} contain truth or fact, ostensibly because many of the poems in \textit{Ise monogatari}, \textit{Yamato monogatari}, and \textit{Heichū monogatari} can be found in other sources and/or associated with real people. At the same time, because their content cannot be pegged to chronologically arranged dates and events in a life story (or because they were not, as far as we know, written by individual women or men posing as women), they are not \textit{nikki}.  

logically consistent, with subtypes based variously on content (*denki monogatari*, *gunki monogatari*), form (*uta monogatari*, *setsuwa*), relation to earlier types (*giko monogatari*), and fictionality/factuality (*tsukuri monogatari*, *rekishi monogatari*), sometimes with significant overlap between categories (*rekishi monogatari*, *gunki monogatari*, and even *uta monogatari* may contain *setsuwa*, for example). There are ambiguities deriving from the fact that terms such as *setsuwa monogatari* or *uta monogatari* may refer either to single, brief anecdotes or to compilations of such anecdotes. In this scheme, *otogizōshi* and *kanazōshi* are not considered to be *monogatari* at all, even though the titles of individual works in these categories often contain the word, and *otogizōshi* as a group are sometimes referred to as “Muromachi *monogatari*.” Arguably, the *tsukuri monogatari* (and particularly *Genji monogatari*) serves as the prototype in this system, from which the other genres are merely deviations—in the *Nihon koten bungaku daijiten*, *tsukuri monogatari* is defined under *monogatari* and does not have an entry of its own.

For modern scholars, the *uta monogatari*, *Ise monogatari*’s designated genre, is closely connected to the term *utagatari*, a term that (unlike *uta monogatari*) is attested in premodern sources, and refers to conversation about poems, particularly about the circumstances in which their authors composed them. Of the three surviving works typically categorized as *uta monogatari* (*Ise monogatari*, *Yamato monogatari* [*Tales of Yamato*, ca. 951], and *Heichū monogatari* [*Tales of Heichū*, ca. 965]), *Yamato monogatari* seems most fittingly and comprehensively explained in terms of *utagatari* origins. The text consists of some 170 brief narratives that give the “back story” of individual poems or exchanges of poems. Most of these poems were written by historical figures who served at court in the first half of the tenth century and are placed in realistic-seeming contexts of court life at the time, whereas others are given more elaborate legendary contexts. However, though *Ise monogatari* shares *Yamato monogatari*’s approach to placing poetry in narrative context, the work as a whole is unmistakably the product of a sophisticated agenda that goes beyond explaining the origins of

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30. Insofar as *utagatari* are viewed as oral in origin, there are further affinities here to *setsuwa*.

31. *Heichū monogatari* is also referred to as *Heichū nikki* or *Sadafumi nikki*. And the dictionary *Kōjien* muddies the waters further by defining it as a compilation of “love *setsuwa*” about Taira no Sadafumi.
poems. For all its elusiveness, *Ise monogatari* quite clearly gestures in the direction of giving the life story of its anonymous, fictionalized protagonist via his poetry. Given that poems known to have been written by other poets in irrelevant contexts are attributed to *Ise*’s protagonist in order to develop his character, *Ise monogatari*, unlike *Yamato monogatari*, cannot be explained adequately in terms of *utagatari*. Placing *Ise, Yamato*, and *Heichū* together in a group serves to highlight the importance of context to appreciating Heian-period poetry and the importance of contextualized poetry within subsequent *monogatari*. But doing so at the same time downplays and obscures important commonalities that *Ise monogatari* has with other genres, such as poetry collections and poetic diaries.

In any event, I borrow and emphasize Beebee’s notion of genre as a system of differences in order to suggest that designations such as *uta monogatari*, laden as they are with distinctly modern baggage, must be discarded before a consideration of premodern scholarship on *Ise* can proceed. Like any text that cannot be categorized from a normative point of view, *Ise monogatari* contains elements drawn from the range of genres that existed at the time of its composition, and possible defining elements (or defining deficiencies) are identifiable only when the work in question is reflected back in a mirror constructed of other works. The selection of defining elements versus nondefining elements in this or any specific case is entirely dependent upon the critic or commentator who fashions and peers into that mirror, as well as the time and place of the peering. As John Frow argues,

> The order formed between and among genres should be regarded as a historically changing system rather than as a logical order. Such an approach makes it possible to bring together the categories of a poetics with those of the historical event: if genres are actual and contingent forms rather than necessary and essential forms, they are nevertheless not arbitrary. And this in turn means that the “internal” organization of genre . . . can be understood in terms of particular historical codifications of discursive properties.\(^{32}\)

The genre system described above, which (more or less) holds sway now, bears little resemblance to the one within which premodern commentators worked. Although these commentators initially took *Ise* up as an object of

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study because of its poetry, in their attempts to categorize it or position it vis-à-vis other works they were far less concerned with its disjointedness or the prominence of poetry within it than with their sense of it as a work of fact, a work of fiction, or a hybrid of the two. Thus, the shifting status of fiction in the canons of Japanese literature over the last 1,000 years is one of the keys to understanding *Ise monogatari*’s reception, and a final issue to be explored in this study.

The remainder of this book is divided into five parts. Chapter 2 gives background information on Ariwara no Narihira and *Ise monogatari* and its initial formation, then considers early medieval *Ise* scholarship in contrast to scholarship on poetry in an attempt to put the idiosyncrasies of the Old Commentaries on *Ise* in perspective and to provide more context for the emergence of the Transitional Commentaries.

Chapter 3 examines commentaries produced during the chaotic times between the beginning of the Ōnin War in 1467 and the early years of the Tokugawa shogunate (in other words, the early Transitional Commentaries). This period saw the beginnings of the commodification of learning, as courtiers, reduced to poverty during the violent upheavals that swept the capital, turned to scholarship to support themselves, selling off prized family texts, commentaries, and expertise to elite warriors and eventually wealthy townsmen who were eager to elevate themselves (and in the case of warriors, to legitimize their claims to authority) through participation in the courtly literary tradition. Itinerant renga masters formed another group of key players, both instructing and receiving instruction from courtiers, giving lectures and producing commentaries of their own at the request of warriors, and serving as couriers, facilitating exchanges of texts and money between the other groups. Commentators of this period rejected in strong terms the earlier esoteric commentaries that had sought out historical facts and personages behind every incident in the *Ise monogatari* and began to view the text as at least partly fictitious. However, a closer examination reveals that opportunistic use of old, pseudo-historical interpretation persists in these commentaries, a phenomenon that is in some cases related to value-enhancing stratification policies whereby certain interpretations were reserved for disciples of highest standing in the school, and alternate views disseminated more widely.

Chapter 4 focuses on the rise of printing and commercial publishing in the early modern period and its impact on the production and circu-
lation of *Ise monogatari* and its commentaries. Although the earliest printed commentaries were simply reproductions of late medieval scholars’ Transitional Commentaries, by the second half of the seventeenth century a new range of people without court connections—*haikai* poets, Confucian scholars, and even writers of popular fiction—began producing commentaries intended to introduce the classics to a broad audience, mostly repackaging the still-authoritative interpretations of late medieval courtly scholars in new, user-friendly formats. The pursuit of new audiences led to a radical transformation in the semiology of the printed page: commentary that had originally been presented as an undifferentiated mass of exegesis flowing seamlessly out of a base text too minutely divided to be read on its own, began to fragment into headnotes, interlinear notes, and vernacular glosses, and, in some cases, to be accompanied by illustrations, summaries of important points, and other features, framing rather than carving up the base text and reconfiguring it as an object of reading as well as of study.

Chapter 5 discusses further transformations in the conduct of literary scholarship that accompanied the rise of *kokugaku*, or nativism, in the eighteenth century and with it the development of the New Commentaries. Nativist scholars, who were mostly commoners or Shinto shrine affiliates, are thought of as having promoted the study of the native tradition as a repository of national identity, a project that required them to challenge not only the Confucian scholars who dominated the intellectual world at the time, but also the court-centered aristocrats who had controlled the classical poetic tradition since the medieval period. In the New Commentaries, they pursued this aim through pointed criticism of medieval scholars’ secretiveness, conservatism, and lack of philological rigor, and in the process developed new approaches to fictional narrative.

I close with an epilogue discussing the creation of the genre designation *uta monogatari*, or “poem-tale,” to classify *Ise monogatari* in the Meiji period. This category grew out of negotiation with Western notions of genre, which dictated a separation among drama, poetry, and narrative, and out of attempts to create genealogies of narrative kinds that led smoothly to the modern novel (*shōsetsu*). The mid-nineteenth century came to be characterized as the age of the *uta monogatari*, an intermediate stage between an age of poetry and the age of *tsukuri monogatari* (fictional tale), the pinnacle of which was *Genji monogatari*. From the 1910s, the *uta monogatari* came to be viewed as a genre that emphasized love and
lyricism (important concerns in the literature of the time), leading to new conceptualizations of *Ise monogatari*’s significance in the classical literary canon.

I also include, in Appendix 1, a diagram showing the relations between characters who appear in *Ise monogatari*, and in Appendix 2, translations of sections of *Ise monogatari* that come up for discussion in the body of the book. The latter are provided purely as a convenience to readers who may not be familiar with *Ise monogatari* and are not intended to represent a definitive reading of it. Throughout this book, I have tried to render passages from *Ise monogatari* in ways that reflect the concerns of the commentators under discussion, but, unavoidably, I have my own understanding of what this extremely spare and often ambiguous text means, an understanding that sometimes differs from that of other available English translations. These translations may therefore serve secondarily to make some of my biases visible. Nevertheless, Appendix 2 should be understood and used with acknowledgment of the purely provisional spirit in which it is included.

33. Four full translations have been undertaken to date: Vos, *A Study of the Ise-monogatari* (1957); H.C. McCullough, *Tales of Ise* (1968); Harris, *Tales of Ise* (1972); and Mostow and Tyler, *The Ise Stories* (2010). The very useful commentary sections in the last of these include frequent references to premodern scholarship on *Ise*.