It seemed as if my real self was gradually appearing on the surface and threatening my former assumed self.

Mori Ogai's “The Dancing Girl” is one of the most popular novels in Japan, because it's included in almost every high school texts, so everybody world wide has read it.

It's also been translated into a number of different languages, so lot of people abroad, I think, have read it as well. The story is about a young man who discovers himself through this dilemma which is encountered in a foreign country.

“The Dancing Girl” by Mori Ogai was published in 1890. Ogai based the story on his own experiences as a foreign student living in Germany. Toyotaro is a young official sent by the government to study in Germany. One day he meets a poor young dancing girl Elise, and falls in love. But this love affair causes Toyotaro his position. Then through the intervention of his friend Aizawa, Toyotaro gets a chance to return home. Which to choose his career or Elise. Eventually he decides to go back to Japan. The shock sends Elise over the edge, for in fact she's carrying his child. The tension between a weak career and an emotional freedom tears their love apart.

His dilemma is a classical one whether he's going to take his job or the girl. Something that we can understand these days as well. Of course he can't have both and he ends up really hurting this young woman. He doesn't intend to but by the choice that he makes, he's really damaged her psyche and her life as well. The story was written in his room in a ship on a way back to Japan. He's alone at night. Toyotaro decides to look back on the mistakes he's made and the sort of hurt that he sort of created around him and decides to write this sort of story by himself. And it's while he's writing, through the course of his writing that he realizes a sort of new, unknown sort of self, sort of rising up to meet him. He sees his own true identity for the first time on the way back from Europe going to Japan. It's through the process of writing the story the fact that he notices that he's made a big mistake. He's saving grace, I think, in the story. He describes his experience of childhood as being a sort of dictionary in the service of his mother or a law in the service of his boss. He works in the ministry of justice. And he is sort of blames his circumstance on all of his people around him, but through the experience of falling in love, and parting from his lover very, very painfully, he sort of discovered his own sort of center of being. He doesn't know precisely what he's going to do when he gets back to Japan. But he knows that whatever he does, it's going to be his decision. And the sort of discovery of deciding for yourself of how you're going to live your own life is something that is very, very original, and something very, very new, a very common problem among young Japanese intellectuals like Mori Ogai in his generation.

Out of the question. Toyotaro is in a weak position. He is in the capital of pressure walking around as an Asian single man. That means that there was a great deal of sort of prejudices, I think, of the sent in his ways. He establishes himself as an Asian man by falling in love with a young dancing girl who is in a lot of trouble. She's in a very weak position. He tries to protect her and to instruct her as well. He gains the sort of position over Elize and in the course of doing that, sort of gains his own sort of footing in the story. That was something that's very, very stimulating, and very, very shocking to
Japanese readers at the time.