This dissertation focuses on *kokugaku* (national learning/nativism) thought in the late Tokugawa period, addressing it in terms of linguistic theory and philosophy. In the late 18th century, *Kokugaku* scholars, such as Motoori Norinaga, faced a theoretical crisis stemming from the pressure of relativism based on world history. This pressure forced *Kokugaku* scholars into a hierarchical order of historical progress determined by rational reason. In contrast, neo-Confucianism in China, which played a leading role in the Japanese cultural and intellectual scene, adapted itself easily to rational and scientific discipline. From the late 17th to the early 18th centuries in Japan, neo-Confucianism had been fiercely criticized by Ogyu Sorai, a scholar of *Kogaku* (a discipline on ancient history and language). Ogyu stressed that a Confucian discipline must go back and understand ancient Chinese language, customs and thoughts to the extent of identifying with scholars of ancient Chinese. Even though there was a
difference between Confucian and Kokugaku nativism, Motoori Norinaga's work started from the view that an expected discipline must try to orient itself towards reviving ancient Japanese language (yamato kotoba) and ancient customs as they were by differentiating these from language and customs that were undermined by Chinese modes and mentalities (kara gokoro). Through these attempts, Motoori and his fellow scholars conceived of representing a "lived experience" of language that was imagined to have been realized in ancient times. Establishing a positivistic discipline of ancient language concerned with a lived experience of language, the Motoori School devised a way in which "Japanese" could have an indifferent position towards the chronological order rationalized and historicized by world history. This project also meant inventing a logic of de-centralization beyond not only any kind of centrism but also any critique against centralization that is still caught in the logic of binary opposition.

This dissertation aims to describe the trajectory of Kogaku and Motoori Norinaga, and his affiliations with late Kokugaku based on the following three questions: First, how is a logic of de-centralization possible or impossible beyond not only any kind of centrism but also any critique against centralization? Second, in order
to represent a "lived experience" of language, Kogaku and Kokugaku invented philological and linguistic disciplines. Their works also makes it possible to deal with poetic imagination, which creates language itself, and the deeper experience of language in which verbal language and non-verbal language cannot be differentiated, in the sense that these works instead focused on the issue of the figuraiity of language. In my dissertation, this question is investigated from two points of view; one is based on the method of 18th century Italian thinker / philologist, Giambattista Vico's work in metaphysics and linguistics, and the other is based on the mechanism of auto-affection as a deeper structure of lived experience and its relation to language. Through this focus, I have tried to define how Kogaku and Kokugaku developed this mechanism in terms of its linguistic work on language, and to what degree it considered the logic of figural language and poetic imagination in terms of the hetero-logical-ness of lived experience. The schema of this relation of poetic language to imagination/ auto-affection of lived experience /figural language is called in this paper a co-relation of mono and koto (thing and event/ operation) from which the meaningfulness of phenomena occur.

The third question is concerned with an ethical issue. After Motoori Norinaga,
his affiliates such as Suzuki Akira, Okuni Takamasa, Hirata Atsutane and Suzuki Masayuki moved to complete his thought in the direction of making Kokugaku a teleological system in accordance with the deepening historical crisis of the late Tokugawa Period. Although this transference, in some degree, can be identified with the project of creating a modern subjectivity, nevertheless, it cannot entirely be regarded as such. Rather, the trajectory of late Kokugaku can be outlined in terms of how the self governed itself in accordance with the dilemma between the logic of lived experience and the pressures of world history. I deal with this issue of subjection/subjugation of the self through the way in which Foucault problematizes them in *Histoire de la sexualité*. By analyzing the linguistic theories of late Kokugaku scholars and paying attention to how they found a way to handle/govern/look after the soul that was feasible to their situation, my dissertation tries to situate the characteristics of this ethics concerned with the self within the intellectual history of the late Tokugawa period.

Pursuing these three questions, in Chapter One, I discuss Ogyu Sorai’s plan for a *Kogaku* discipline, comparing it with Vico’s investigation of poetic language and imagination directed towards the ancient period.
Chapter Two investigates Motoori Norinaga's work on song literature, linguistics, and ethics, which he discussed in his masterpiece, Kojiki-den. Through this investigation, I clarify the relation between his idea of mono no aware (meaningfulness of mono) in his early work and his linguistic theory in his later work. In addition, I show that Motoori's investigation on the grammar of Japanese language established a kind of modern subjectivity on the one hand, and at the same time found the tropological effect of metonymy, which sometimes deviated from a purely grammatical role. This regularity and irregularity of language is attested to by his idea of Pantheismus and at the same time, this Pantheismus is guaranteed by its role vis-à-vis the language system.

In conclusion, it is this system that constituted a form of ethics in which there is neither ideal norm nor value but only existential fact and nature given by divine order. Since it shows a harmonized world made up of scientific positivism and a transcendentally divine order, Motoori Norinaga's work inscribed a crucial event on the road to the modern world.

In Chapter Three, I deal with Suzuki Akira's linguistics, which organized Motoori's linguistic theory and that of Fujitani Nariakira, a contemporary of Motoori.
By developing the linguistic idea of syntax and the figurality of language, Suzuki invented a logic that could contain different languages and words. Suzuki's logic was another invention that tried to govern every kind of commodity that could never be controlled by late Tokugawa society.

Such a response based on linguistic work toward the economic and political crisis also produced an effort to systematize a teleological logic by Hirata Atsutane and Okuni Takamasa, whom I deal with in chapter four. Through these efforts, the late Kokugaku scholars managed to resolve a dilemma between the logic of lived experience and the pressures of world history, and handle/govern/look after the soul in a way that was feasible for the crisis. The crisis, however, pushed them to produce a subjectivity modeled by the modern syntax system. Moreover, they applied this idea to a universal but exclusive teleology of "Japan." By referring to the case of a peasant rebellion in 1873, I also suggest how this kind of linguistic dilemma influenced not only the intellectual scene but also the mentality of popular culture. This case seems to be a struggle against the self and negotiation with the self in the self in the area of language, as if the case of late Kokugaku thoughts show.