

Bloom's Modern Critical

# INTERPRETATIONS

Edited and with an Introduction by HAROLD BLOOM

## Murasaki Shikibu's The Tale of Genji



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*Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations*

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*The Tale of Genji*

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*Edited and with an introduction by*

**Harold Bloom**

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## *Editor's Note*

My Introduction ponders the fusion of irony and self-destructive erotic longing in Lady Murasaki's enigmatic masterwork.

Donald Keene, eminent historian of Japanese literature, gives an overview of *The Tale of Genji*, stressing its ongoing centrality in Japanese literature.

Proust is invoked by Doris G. Bargen as an apt analogue to *The Tale of Genji*, after which Richard Bowring notes Murasaki's use of poetry to characterize the essential nature of crucial relationships.

Norma Field, charting the splendors of longing in the saga, allows us to see how his erotic disasters mold the hero, while Amy Vladeck Heinrich returns us to the function of poetry in this novel.

The question of narrative voice is investigated by Amanda Mayer Stinchecum, after which the distinguished scholar Ivan Morris explores the intricacies of court existence.

Substitution, whether through erotic or narrator surrogates, is seen as an informing principle of *The Tale* by H. Richard Okada, while Esperanza Ramirez-Christensen appreciates Murasaki's lyricism.

Royall Tyler illuminates the complex agon between Genji and his tragic love, Murasaki, after which Haruo Shirane meditates upon kingship in *The Tale*.

In this volume's final essay, John R. Wallace compares Lady Murasaki's aesthetic stance with that of the modern novelist Mishima Yukio, finding in him a violent negation that may share more with European eroticism.

JOHN R. WALLACE

*Tarrying with the Negative:  
Aesthetic Vision in  
Murasaki and Mishima*

Murasaki shikibu, 973?-1014?, in writing *Genji Monogatari*, and Mishima Yukio, 1925-1970, in writing *Kinkakuji*, fashion elaborate narratives around the beautiful and the nature of desire as it relates to beauty. Each sees a disturbance in this relationship. A notion of the 'negative' is a critical mediating factor for both writers regarding this relationship, but differences in theory require of them different conclusions about the possibility of encountering beauty, and the potential of literary effort to that purpose.

The present article will argue that Murasaki and Mishima come close to one another in how they narrate desire and describe compelling beauty, even though they differ on the function of a 'negative' within their aesthetics.

In both cases, this 'negative' darkens the vision of beauty; both authors explore beauty's insubstantiality as well as links with anguish and death. But Murasaki's 'negative' is essentially Buddhist. In *Genji Monogatari*, she describes the destructiveness of Hikaru Genji (and others) in the pursuit of his objects of desire; that is, she set desire under the Buddhist rubric of that which is the source of suffering. This belief, together with a deep sense for the fleeting nature of beauty, contributes significantly to her sophisticated version of *mono no aware*. In her writings, the Buddhist teaching of the radical emptiness of material existence consistently threatens to subvert the

magnificence of the heart yearning for the material finery of the world in which her narratives are set. Hikaru Genji is magnificent, but he ages and his light inevitably vanishes altogether.

Mishima, on the other hand, constructs a world in *Kinkakuji* where violence is a compelling, if not root, component of desire and one's relationship to beauty. This 'negative' of Mishima formally resembles that of Hegel where death and destruction are, by dialectic logic (a structure within the realm of reason), a necessary part of truth. At a more sensual level, however, Mishima parts with Hegel's spiritual vision by making central to his discourse the transgression of taboos censoring an impulse to defile one's erotic object. In this sense his notion of eroticism and one's relationship to the beautiful is closer to that of Georges Bataille.<sup>1</sup> For Bataille the erotic object is an intersection of a complex set of archaic impulses that have taken the shape within human consciousness of a double bind where one both seeks and seeks to flee from 'death' (not biological death, but a psychological sense of individuated being—an existence cut off from others which we both desire and fear). Taboos and their transgression form a complementary economy that negotiates this double bind:

The inner experience of eroticism demands from the subject a sensitiveness to the anguish at the heart of the taboo no less great than the desire which leads him to infringe it. This is religious sensibility, and it always links desire closely with terror, intense pleasure and anguish.<sup>2</sup>

It is from this philosophical basis that Bataille arrives at a concept of beauty where,

Beauty is desired in order that it may be befouled; not for its own sake, but for the joy brought by the certainty of profaning it.

Beauty has a cardinal importance, for ugliness cannot be spoiled, and to despoil is the essence of eroticism. Humanity implies the taboos, and in eroticism it and they are transgressed. Humanity is transgressed, profaned and besmirched. The greater the beauty, the more it is befouled.... The forms may alter but violence is constant, at once horrifying and fascinating.<sup>3</sup>

There is no direct link between Bataille and Mishima. Bataille's important work in this area, *L'Erotisme*, was not published until 1957, and *Kinkakuji* was completed in 1956. But Bataille was active on the French intellectual scene from the 1920s until his death in 1962, and his ideas were

as influential as they were the extension of a certain philosophical and artistic proclivity in Europe to explore the links of death, eroticism, evil, and transgression. Reading Bataille does not delineate origins for Mishima's ideas, but it does provide a cross-light that makes certain features of Mishima's texts more apparent. Mishima might not have been attracted to Bataille's argument for the basis of eroticism (as briefly noted above), but such statements as 'Eroticism ... is assenting to life up to the point of death,'<sup>4</sup> does resonate well with Mishima's own views.

### BEAUTY AS A PROBLEM

Let us begin with a few quotations describing the state of mind of men confronting their objects of desire:

The [Akashi] lady was most aristocratic—tall and slender—and Genji felt humbled.<sup>5</sup>

Then I felt that I had been turned into stone. My will, my desire—everything had become stone.<sup>6</sup>

It is no exaggeration to say that the first real problem I faced in my life was that of beauty.<sup>7</sup>

The first of these quotations is from the 'Akashi' chapter of the *Genji*. Genji has chased Akashi no Kimi past her locked door, and now confronts her in private. But before her commanding elegance, he suddenly hesitates. Akashi radiates composure and beauty even at the very moment when she is most compromised. Genji is stalled (*kokoro hazukashiki kehai*,) by the grossness of his own desire. In the second quotation, Mizoguchi, the protagonist of *Kinkakuji*, has leaped out in front of the bicycle of Uiko, a neighborhood girl whom he secretly desires. But when he thus confronts her, his resolve, even his passion, falters. She rides wordlessly past. He later explains, 'It is no exaggeration to say that the first real problem I faced in my life was that of beauty.'

Genji will spend the night in Akashi's chambers, at which time they conceive a child. Their relationship does not end with this one night of love. Eventually Genji brings her and this daughter to his Rokujō mansion in the capital. Mizoguchi, on the other hand, will never again try to express his heart to Uiko. But he will watch enraptured as she betrays her lover. He will mourn and admire her, or, perhaps more precisely, her death at the hand of that lover.

The difference in these outcomes, that is, the success or failure to establish and maintain relationship with what one desires, is a result of how

Murasaki and Mishima define beauty (and beauty's context) and the capacity to encounter beauty. But the above quotations belong to narratives which both start with the notion that the presence of the beautiful, erotic object confronts or disturbs. For both writers, erotic beauty demands their artistic and philosophical attention.

#### MURASAKI: BEAUTY AND SUFFERING

In *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki*, Murasaki describes a time when she thinks over the meaning of her contemplating and writing about beauty:

Seeing the water birds on the lake increase in numbers day by day, I thought to myself how nice it would be if it snowed before we got back to the Palace, the garden would look so beautiful; and then two days later, while I was away on a short visit, lo and behold it did snow. As I watched the rather drab scene at home, I felt depressed and confused. For some years I had existed from day to day in listless fashion, taking note of the flowers, the birds in song, the way the skies changed from season to season, the moon, the frost, and the snow, doing little more than registering the passage of time. How would it all turn out? The thought of my continuing loneliness was quite unbearable, and yet there had been those friends who would discuss trifling matters with me, and others of like mind with whom I could exchange my innermost thoughts.<sup>8</sup>

In *Kinkakuji*, Mizoguchi says:

When people concentrate on the idea of beauty, they are, without realizing it, confronted with the darkest thoughts that exist in this world. That, I suppose, is how human beings are made.<sup>9</sup>

The forces that bind the *Genji* narrative are those of bright silver and gold *miyabi* as Heian aesthetic and ethic. But in the *Genji*, Murasaki expands the scope of the ethics of this *miyabi*. She adds significantly to that cultural formula by testing and deploying at a new or deep level Buddhist concepts of insubstantiality. The brightness of *miyabi* achieves something close to a sacred quality (that is, a uniquely moving quality that derives its bewitching presence by gesturing to another, unknown world) by being set within the structure of *yūgen* with its contrast of light and dark. The structure of *yūgen*, although not yet clearly defined in Murasaki's time (indeed, I would suggest



that *Genji Monogatari* significantly contributed to the developing formula), is the fleeting moment of a beautiful object that embraces a sense of another, dark or infinite world. The manifestation of a specific, well-defined beautiful object is enhanced by sensing through it a mysterious and nearly formless 'world'.

Murasaki follows this aesthetic link from the bright attractiveness of beauty into the dark mystery of beauty, making then a further and important extension, an associative link into the destructive power of human desire. For Murasaki, that which is most beautiful has the quality of *yūgen*—the meeting of light and dark—but for her this meeting point exists at the border of life and death, pleasure and suffering, this world and the other. Superior beauty is tightly bound to brevity of existence. That which is exceptionally beautiful is short-lived. As Aileen Gatten has pointed out, the visitation of death in the *Genji* enhances the person's beauty rather than detracting from it:

Characters in *Genji* who die a good death always become more beautiful as their lives end. As we shall see with Murasaki, death can give a character far more beauty than she ever possessed in life.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, Gatten suggests that this link of death with beauty may originate with Murasaki (although she speaks, I am sure, of the case of literary prose).<sup>11</sup> The death scene of Murasaki no Ue is, as Gatten notes, the example par excellence of this:

Though her hair had been left untended through her illness, it was smooth and lustrous and not a strand was out of place. In the bright lamplight the skin was a purer, more radiant white than the living lady, seated at her mirror, could have made it. Her beauty, as if in untroubled sleep, emptied words like 'peerless' of all content.<sup>12</sup>

Murasaki takes up a discussion of the gross or vulgar aspect of human desire—whether these are Mizoguchi's 'darkest thoughts' is precisely the topic of the present article—from the perspective of *miyabi*'s high culture and elegance. She introduces and examines, approaches, human baseness from a removed or protected, perhaps some might say transcendental, perspective. Elegance is the critical mediating factor, the code or license that she uses to move through an erotic, intimate world of sexual events. Her management of this discourse is most keen. She seeks not to repress the presence of various erotic impulses in her narratives. Rather, she manages to make a

debasement aspect of desire both distant and close depending on whether one leaves in place the mediating code of *miyabi*, or translates past it and reads her story as one of rape, abduction, confinement, erotic competition at the expense of another, and so forth. An additional reading that, I believe, she welcomed.

At the sublime level, that is, in the elegant, Buddhism-infused world of Murasaki's *mono no aware*, beauty is moving because it is insubstantial, part of the ever-changing working out of fate. However, through its constant repetitions, variations, and reformulations that are the very texture of the *Genji* narrative, the inexorable, karmic forward momentum of desire is also made out as that which can disclose our own emptiness and insubstantiality, as we are in and constituted of that false world where desire arises and suffering unfolds. Here is a slippage from the appreciation of love and amorous fate in the beautiful terms of *mono no aware* to a more disturbing, and less beautiful, view of desire's intentions and results as indicated by Buddhism. As one of the *Genji*'s extreme narrative effects, desire is karmically linked to death. Murasaki makes this clear early in the narrative when Yūgao dies in the arms of a Hikaru Genji who has just proclaimed his love for her. But Yūgao is far from an abject object that, in Buddhist tracts such as *Ōjōyōshū*, would serve as an example of the world of suffering and the reason why one should flee from it. Rather, Murasaki places the secret of Yūgao's beauty on the other side of death.

This is precisely where Murasaki exceeds the discursive space of Buddhism. She determinedly links to a traditional notion (that is, a formula prior to the importation of Buddhism) of the truly beautiful as brief-lived a structure of suffering or loss that co-arises with the passionate response to the ephemerally beautiful. But she does not effect a closure at that point. Instead, she develops a path that loops anguish back into notions of suffering as beautiful. In this way she creates a unique and surprisingly functional mobility between a sublime ethics of *miyabi* that regards romance as refined human expression and Buddhist teaching that reproves amorous desire. She imports into *miyabi* some of the disturbing qualities of the erotic impulse while refusing to teach against it.

The figures of the *Genji* narrative achieve supreme moments of elegant beauty. Their power to transport the reader into the sublime field of *miyabi* is fairly undiminished with the passage of nearly a thousand years. Murasaki mastered Heian literary expressive potential by producing a breath-taking discourse superior to any other prose working within or upon the values of *miyabi*. But her writing agenda is not to lift us 'up' into a world of courtly beauty that is successfully blind to suffering. The long, bleak road of

unwelcome fate that stretches out over endless days of longing with little hope, of separation from one's beloved, and the anxiety surrounding the risks of transgression are also an important part of the text's mood and the narrative turns. *Miyabi* and suffering are dynamically at odds even while producing a surface effect of harmony. How can the magnificent Hikaru Genji be such an emotional wreck inside? Yet how can he not? To love is to suffer gloriously, to make others suffer similarly. Yet, as mentioned above, the redundancy of the plots of desire begins to question the 'gloriously' portion of that appraisal.

While Murasaki's text might delineate the suffering of love, indicate the fragility of elegant self-assurance, and even explore the eroticism of vulnerability, her works cannot be usefully taken down the path articulated by Bataille, where, as suggested at the beginning of this article, the formative force of eroticism and erotic literature itself is the ecstasy of a violence that threatens the logic of community and personal psychic integrity. While this may be so with Mishima, in the case of Murasaki this would be to misread her pact with her society. Murasaki is not first and foremost subversive to her world. Bataille's position despite the subject matter is essentially an early Christian moral stance: truth will be found in opposition to current social values that are widespread and widely corrupt. Opposition to a corrupt social norm, plus sacrificing all interest in material success within this corrupt context, is the first step toward godliness. Murasaki's position is classical Chinese and *uji*-oriented Japanese: truth will be found within a genuine reading of and contribution to the social order. Her narrative relies upon the Buddhist tenet of non-materiality that operates beyond issues of individual suffering (a sacred image in Christianity) and that leaves aside rather than subverts the norms of her social world.

Genji, exquisite figure of male desire, simply disappears with the first words of Chapter 42: 'After the Shining One had withdrawn it seemed unlikely there to be any descendants of the same brilliance.'<sup>13</sup> The ideal that was invoked through the complex figure of Genji and marked by the metaphor of his light simply goes out. This is the phenomenology of desire in its vicissitude as seen by Buddhism. Genji must die before the end of the narrative because desire itself is, for Murasaki, the secondary knowledge of insubstantiality. Death in this context does not mark a Wagnerian idealistic and dramatic union on a higher plane (a transcendence of a corrupt social order) which is presented as a glorious event; instead, it is the pedestrian, if sad, turning of the dharmic wheel, which is the same on all planes. Desire occurs in the presence of fate that portends the certainty of loss. It can embrace only frangible hopes. Its flight is limited.

## MISHIMA: BEAUTY AND THE OBJECT

Mishima places greater emphasis, or at least speaks more directly, than Murasaki on the sensual origins of his aesthetics, and understands sensuality itself differently. No doubt there is here a significance in gender difference, if not in terms of how Mishima's 'body' is present in his writings and Murasaki's in hers, then at least certainly in a difference of discursive restraints and possibilities afforded to the social interface of the two writers in terms of their gender. But I do not seek here to explore the origins of their differences but only to describe in broad terms the character, and something of the implication, of those differences.

Despite a running discourse in *Kinkakuji* regarding Buddhist metaphysics (one that sharply critiques physical pleasure and beauty itself), sensuality for Mizoguchi remains a present negative force, stubbornly resisting Buddhist authoritative assertions of insubstantiality. Mishima retains a concern over ecstasy and its origins in 'the darkest thoughts that exist in this world' that Murasaki viewed with Buddhist poise (or hesitation) as well as through the mediation of a discourse of *miyabi*. The Golden Pavilion is an obtrusive presence that Mizoguchi believes needs to be either thoroughly understood or thoroughly destroyed if he is to preserve his very right to self-existence, where self-existence is defined as the capacity to be enveloped in ecstasy. Beauty is a puzzle that demands action from Mizoguchi. No doubt in this area of response to beauty as well we are confronting differing imperatives embedded in cultural notions of gender.

Yet despite what amounts to the confession of a tenacious faith in beauty (since as a hindrance to pleasure beauty is taken as presenting a significant challenge), Mishima is acutely aware of a subjective (not metaphysical as with Murasaki) phenomenon of insubstantiality. Mishima's beautiful object includes within it a destabilizing immanence just as did Murasaki's, that is, the structure of *yūgen* that suggests a darkness within its very brightness. For example:

I recalled the night of the typhoon at the beginning of autumn when I had stood watch in the temple. Much as the building may have been exposed to the moonlight, a heavy, luxuriant darkness [*gōsha na yami*] had settled over it and this darkness had penetrated into the nocturnal temple, into the shutters, into the wooden doors, under the roof with its peeling gold-foil. And this was only natural. For the Golden Temple itself was simply a nihility that had been designed and constructed with the most exquisite care. Just so, although the outside of this breast gave

forth the bright radiance of flesh, the inside was filled with darkness. Its true substance consisted of the same heavy, luxuriant darkness.<sup>14</sup>

This darkness for Mishima, however, is not suggesting a mysteriousness that gestures toward a dharmic universe that transcends the pleasure and pain of the human condition. Instead, this darkness is fecund with abject images, even evil in something close to a pure essence. The beautiful and the abject are near to one another and in active relationship. Thus the sleeping and desirable Mariko appears to be a corpse, while she herself finds a harmonious unity with the abject image of a fly (an image that surely parodies the Buddhist image of the butterfly sleeping on the temple bell, meant to represent the illusory nature of the world):

'Then I noticed that all of a sudden Mariko had fallen asleep. She lay there like a corpse and on the roundness of her bosom, which was illuminated by the bed lamp, the fly, too, was motionless and had evidently dozed off.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout *Kinkakuji*, there are reversals between an oppressive, enormous Golden Pavilion and the ordinary-sized, disappointing Golden Pavilion. Their displacement of one another is clearly taken up as a central problem of the work. Not at all unlike Murasaki's narrative, in *Kinkakuji* beauty is unstable. In Murasaki's vision, magnificence is subverted by fate (the formative theme of the other great classical narrative, *Heike Monogatari*) and beauty is related to suffering both as its cause and even with suffering as an aspect of beauty itself. For Mishima, the abject, defilement, transgression, and evil present themselves together with beauty as part of its essence. In *Kinkakuji*, it is Kashiwagi Mizoguchi's club-footed, cynical friend, who functions as the informant about this strange intersection of the beautiful and the repulsive:

'How shall I put it? Beauty—yes, beauty is like a decayed tooth. It rubs against one's tongue, it hangs there, hurting one, insisting on its own existence. Finally it gets so that one cannot stand the pain and one goes to the dentist to have the tooth extracted. Then, as one looks at the small, dirty, brown, blood-stained tooth lying in one's hand, one's thoughts are likely to be as follows: "Is this it? Is this all it was? That thing which caused me so much pain, which made me constantly fret about its existence, which was stubbornly rooted within me, is now merely a dead object...."<sup>16</sup>

When sensuality is understood as an important component of beauty, as it is with Mishima and Murasaki, it is linked to an unstable, organic, vicissitudinous complex of representations. The instability of making the human body a reference point is precisely what Plato wished to sublimate in his 'ascending ladder' of the pursuit of eternal truth through philosophical inquiry. Sexual desire is transformed, stabilized, and purified by being reset into an entirely discursive universe disassociated from sensuality, into the love of philosophy. In *Symposium*, where most of Plato's ideas about Eros are developed, the goddess Diotima explains to Socrates the path to the highest truth:

First of all ... he will fall in love with the beauty of one individual body.... Next he must consider how nearly related the beauty of any one body is to the beauty of any other, when he will see that if he is to devote himself to loneliness of form it will be absurd to deny that the beauty of each and every body is the same.

Next he must grasp that the beauties of the body are as nothing to the beauties of the soul.... And from this he will be led to contemplate the beauty of laws and institutions....

And next, his attention should be diverted from institutions to the sciences, so that he may know the beauty of every kind of knowledge.... And, turning his eyes toward the open sea of beauty, he will find in such contemplation the seed of the most fruitful discourse and the loftiest thought, and reap a golden harvest of philosophy.<sup>17</sup>

Freud, however, returned the body to the discourse that searched for truth or understanding. Thus post-Freudian critics, from Marxists to feminists to psychoanalytic philosophers, have all had to confront the problem of the body's place in language. Julia Kristeva has explored this contact point between biology and language with her theory of semiotic and symbolic representation, where the pre-linguistic, semiotic 'chora' ('the *chora*, as rupture and articulations [rhythm] precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality')<sup>18</sup> impute important affective meaning into language's discursive grammar of representation. Meaningful language, for Kristeva, always has its semiotic and symbolic portions.<sup>19</sup>

Kristeva's claim, one that seeks to capture something of how language becomes artistic language, that is, how literature moves us, is a large one. Language in all cultures and times would have this two-part structure. The



present article operates under her thesis. It is from this position that I suggested above that sensuality, when taken as an important component of beauty, links the effort to represent beauty discursively to an unstable, organic, vissitudinous complex of not necessarily grammatical, or even fully understandable, formations. In taking this position, I set aside space within this critical analysis for the possibility of signification that exceeds or refuses discursive logic, that makes its claims from affective ('semiotic') movements, not metonymic ('symbolic') argument. This is, I believe, useful when talking of Murasaki, but essential when trying to discuss Mishima's associative leaps from ideal beauty to self-destructive evil. Murasaki obviously accomplished her work outside the Platonic tradition. But her articulate expansion of *miyabi* to include suffering as a beautifying element, or her exploration of the role of separation and death in the beauty of romance, produced a sublimating movement that reset sexual activity within a code of regulated manner and the outlines of appropriate emotions. It was with mediation and sublimation, and in the realm of an aesthetics that borders on ethics, that she negotiated the body-language interchange—a strategy not so distant from that of Plato.

Mishima also confronted this problem of representation, of trying to place within discourse something essentially pre-linguistic. He tried in his own way to order, outline or stabilize this body-language interchange, to encode in his/our language the signifiers of sensuality. But his method is not Murasaki's socializing, as it were, loop of romance and suffering (by taking sexual desire and the anxiety of loss, and placing it into a discourse of courtly elegance that is designed to manage or moderate the disruptive potential of these states of mind/body). Rather, Mishima follows a model of transgressive behavior, where the eruption of anti-social acts (betrayal, arson, rape, and so on) articulates or at least outlines the nature of erotic demand as he 'understands', perhaps we should say 'feels', it. Beauty is the target and receptacle of this eruption which is a response to that very beauty. Again, while we are certainly walking a line close to gender issues, we are also working within two different worlds of discourse—a classical tradition where artistic activity was meant to essentially uphold social norms, to participate in a society where the producers and consumers of art were of the same group, as Konishi has rightly described it,<sup>20</sup> and a Western modern tradition (in which Mishima by choice participated) where social norm lies as a hindrance between the subject and truth, and must be transcended or violated in order to reach a deep understanding of things. The philosopher/artist must travel alone to know life.

## 'TARRYING WITH THE NEGATIVE'

The title of the present article is based on a passage in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* that describes the necessary, dialectic structure of true 'Spirit' (the thinking soul that has the courage and strength to embark on pure scientific analysis). In the following quotation, he is talking about Beauty associated with a positive force which resists intellectual analysis that would reduce something to its parts, which is regarded as a type of 'death'.

Lacking strength, Beauty hates the Understanding for asking of her what it cannot do. But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself .... Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it [Spirit] into being.<sup>21</sup>

I chose this title because Murasaki's beautification of bad fate and Mishima's interest in abject images and how they relate to the beautiful seem to share something with the upward spiral of the Hegelian dialectic where the 'negative' is both a stimulant and embedded remainder of a higher consciousness. I am interested in how Murasaki and Mishima have included to useful effect 'negative' aspects that would mediate between a desiring subject and a desirable object. Hegel, Murasaki, and Mishima all explore how one object (or subject) relates to another (person or concept), and what makes possible or enhances this encounter. This 'negative', this dismemberment of the familiar through the 'tremendous power of the negative'<sup>22</sup> that Hegel says can be called death—and the tarrying there—becomes famously in Freud the forbidden wellspring of culture. Hegel's dualistic structure of a dialectic of conflict that produces a higher unity undergoes a significant and irreversible alteration in Freud's model of *id*-(*super*) ego that produces culture.

Freud's commitment to medicine and biology made him set aside some of Hegel's idealism, but the notion that the human soul necessarily engages and is reformulated by a darkness, an unknown, an Other or death (as a biological impulse) is a linchpin of his theory of self and culture. But he locates in these archaic layers of the human psyche impulses of violence that make a new interpretation of Hegel's metaphysics by claiming a biological content for such forces. Hegel's death 'dismembers', but is also the necessary occasion for a unitary reformulation. Freud's *Thanatos* is no less grand in

scope, but it has a dense, material content of violent, destructive forces that play out their destructiveness at both the level of the individual's inner life and in social phenomena such as war.

Thus the significance of death, evil, and the abject were important themes in Europe and European writers of interest to Mishima, such as Marquis de Sade (1740–1814) and *Justine*, Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) and *The Flower of Evil*, and Raymond Radiguet (1903–1923) and *The Devil in the Flesh*.<sup>23</sup> All of these philosophers and writers retain something of Plato's view of Eros, that is, they conceive of the sexual drive (with its intrusions, as eroticism, at the borders of social norms) as a disruptive force that threatens individual (and community) stability. In *Phaedrus*, Plato, using the metaphor of the white and dark horse that together pull a single chariot, describes man's nature as dual. The white horse wishes to soar up toward ideals, but the dark horse (which must be beaten into submission, as the charioteer 'covers his scurrilous tongue and jaws with blood, and forces his legs and haunches to the ground, causing him much pain')<sup>24</sup> seeks only bodily pleasures.<sup>25</sup> Further, if we provisionally follow Foucault's rereading of the history and production of sexuality in the West, from about the time of Freud, and owing to his works (but only in part), eroticism also begins to be viewed as hiding secrets regarding self and being.<sup>26</sup> It is within this philosophical context that Mishima finds the legitimacy and stimulation to embark on his expedition into the mysteriousness of eroticism that he, too, associates with disruptive, violent, even evil impulses. Mizoguchi's 'dark thoughts' include ruminations of this sort.

Murasaki works with a less problematized or valorized view of the erotic. Sexual intercourse was constituted as a healthy act (at least for the men) within Chinese medical theory as propounded by Heian physicians, indigenous ('Shinto') notions, and Shingon Buddhist tantric teaching. For example, in the case of Chinese medical teachings imported to Japan and used by the Ministry of Medicine during Murasaki's time, sexual intercourse was considered both preventative medicine and a supplement to the administration of drugs for the recovery from illness. It drew into the man yin forces to balance his yang; further, once sexual intercourse was complete with one woman, she was no longer beneficial to the man as her yin, once transferred to him, was temporarily gone. Thus the man should sleep with several different women in the course of one night. The number of women recommended differed, but one text, *Gyokubō Hiketsu*, recommended three, nine or eleven women in one night, a count corresponding to the number of brush strokes in the character for yang.<sup>27</sup>

Thus, from several points of view, sexual relations and sexual desire were not articulated as a moment drawing one close to inner psychic violence

as they were an occasion for health, hope, and felicity in terms of sexual politics. Suffering that results from loss and longing owing to the conditions of fate are the primary motifs of Murasaki's texts, not an inner struggle with violence or evil seeking expression. Her 'negative' is not associated with Plato's dark horse that required violent, one might say, virile control.<sup>28</sup> Her 'negative' was refined within the descriptive discourse of Buddhism that posits radical material insubstantiality. Murasaki thus places the possibility of 'truth' outside the vagaries of desire. But she does not vigorously pursue this truth; rather, she lingers with the compelling narratives generated by movements of desire, finding there the source for the richness of her stories and the beauty of her diction itself.

*Genji Monogatari* is, then, not by any true measure a religious text in either the Western or Buddhist sense, where 'religious text' means discursive indications of a determined intent to forsake or surpass sexual interest. In this sense Murasaki's narrative shares with Mishima a non-Buddhist interest in and interpretation of sensuality. The difference is how the content of the 'negative' is conceived, and how it is invited into their understanding of aesthetics and texts articulating those aesthetics. In other words, the issue is the characteristics of the mediating function of that 'negative', what relationship it sets up between the subject and the desirable object considered beautiful (or, in Mishima's case, sometimes directly with an abstract figure called 'beauty' itself). In this regard, Murasaki and Mishima part ways.

For Murasaki, *miyabi* mediates between the desiring subject and its object, not only to enhance the beauty of the object, but to place it in reach. to create the possibility of subjectively meaningful contact with what is beautiful through the discipline of sensitivity and the capacity to understand the nature of a situation, whether it be a natural scene, an artistic occasion, or the words and heart of one's lover. One 'touches' the beautiful through understanding—where understanding is a sort of selfless, harmonious appreciation of and adjustment to the object. In a sense, the object itself is left undisturbed. This capacity to understand is the result of refined sensitivity, which is itself the result of training in the arts and disciplined nurturing of the emotions.

But Murasaki's *miyabi* is more than courtly refinement. By placing *mono no aware* at the center of one's capacity to be sensitive, its refined spirit is linked to broader issues of karmic fate and the Buddhist assertion of the illusory nature of the world. Beauty is framed with both the sensuality of the courtly arts and the unreliability of the human bond, the inevitability of the cycle of suffering, or simply the essential transitory nature of the object that one finds beautiful or desirable. Under the sign of a Buddhist negative that

asserts the insubstantiality of the desiring mind, Murasaki subjugates desire, but precisely in so doing keeps it at hand. The Buddhist negative is put to work to deepen one's sensitivity, not to thwart it. Surface beauty is linked to an unseen world through the aesthetic structure of the mysterious immanent in the concrete, that is, *yūgen*, making the beautiful object not less convincing but on the contrary more compelling in its mystery. Beauty in the *Genji* is never the towering Golden Pavilion of Mishima's *Kinkakuji*, not because Murasaki's estimation of the significance of the beautiful was any less, but because the enormous part of beauty is kept, with most definite intention, invisible. Murasaki's beauty has the vibrancy of that which embraces a contradiction, namely, *miyabi*'s limited optimism that one can have a significant encounter with or understanding of the beautiful with Buddhist admonition that desire arising around a beautiful object is the first step in the cycle of suffering (a teaching that Murasaki shows she can read backward as the beauty of suffering). *Miyabi* is supported by a belief that beauty and harmony are possible through proper, hard work, but to touch the beautiful nevertheless does not alter the truth of insubstantiality and of fate that will find its path into misfortune.

Mishima sees the problem in more imperative terms, with a more active posture, and with a radical pessimism that Murasaki might find not entirely unintelligible in the language of her own aesthetics of fate (Buddhist notions of salvation through *tariki*, 'grace'). For Mishima, the beautiful must be engaged, but this achievement is from the outset impossible. Only inverted contact is possible: the mediating act that can bring together the desiring subject and its object is an invasion of rights via transgression, especially betrayal. Here the 'negative' with which Mishima productively tarries is not a categorically different type of thing (no-thing) as it is in Buddhism that adds a qualitatively different, if mysterious and formless though affectively downbeat, facet to the experience of beauty. Rather, like Freud's *Thanatos*, it is a force of the same presence as other forces. Murasaki regulates, transforms, and enhances—socializes—the psychic energy of eroticism by translating it into the controlled discourse of *miyabi* that can comfortably mix with, even support, other public discourses, especially those of politics and the arts.

Mishima, in *Kinkakuji* at least, envisions eroticism as having a violent and amoral, if not immoral, essence that provides a channel to the beautiful only through the inverted terms of transgression. Mizoguchi's excessive passion moves in two directions, but both are violent. He either wishes to submit entirely to beauty (where it will engulf him—he is at the receiving end of a transgression of his rights), or to establish rights of possession through mastery over it, defined in terms of the violation or defilement of

'rights' proper to beauty through acts of betrayal. Mishima has Mizoguchi seek to encounter beauty by making it an object of defilement and betrayal. Calling this the 'logic of profanation', Julia Kristeva puts it succinctly when she writes of Proust's placing his family furniture and photographs on display at a brothel: 'Desire debases its object in order to get to it more effectively.'<sup>29</sup> Kristeva argues that in order to narrate the unsettling significance of the sexual act, the narrative must first become obscene, then treat its beloved 'like an ancient God'.<sup>30</sup> Mizoguchi's view of relationship pivots on the hierarchical that is close to this double movement of debasement and over-estimation: either one possesses an object or is possessed by it through subjugation or extreme submission.

As mentioned above, in addition to the theoretical room in Murasaki's Buddhist referenced aesthetics to entertain Mishima's radical pessimism, there is other common ground. Despite Murasaki's interest in the appreciation and production of beauty through the socializing intent of the discipline of *miyabi*, transgressive moments are often found in her narratives. Murasaki incorporates such ambiguities within her aesthetic (and in a way that enhances her works). The following is from her diary.

On the way back to my quarters I looked in at Lady Saishō's room, only to find that she was asleep. She lay with her head pillowed on a writing box, her face all but hidden by a series of robes, dark red lined with green, purple lined with dark red, over which she had thrown a deep crimson gown of unusually glossy silk; she made an entrancing scene. Almost convinced that she had stepped right out of a painting I pulled back the sleeve that covered her face. 'You look just like a fairy-tale princess!' I said.

She awoke with a start.

'Are you out of your mind?' she said, propping herself up. 'Waking people up like that. It's scandalous!'

I was charmed by the delicate flush on her features. A good example of someone looking even more attractive than usual.<sup>31</sup>

Drawn into a friend's room by her languorous repose, Murasaki seats herself aside the woman's head and gently pulls down her silk coverlet to peak at her mouth. She then teases, 'You look just like a fairy-tale princess.' This is a delicate passage of violation that embodies in the figure of a self-written Murasaki Shikibu the function of gazing and the pleasure of transgression. Although reprimanded by Saishō no Kimi, who is angry at being awakened or awakened in such a fashion, Murasaki does not retreat at her friend's words but rather is taken by the pleasure of the woman's flush.



This little episode is small in scale, but it provides a good model for reading Murasaki's type of transgressive event.

In *Genji Monogatari*, we cannot progress far without this shadow of transgression crossing our path. The prime energy of the narrative for its first forty or so chapters is the forbidden relationship between Genji and his surrogate mother Fujitsubo no Chūgū, consort to his father. The *Genji* can be and has been read as the story of a boy's efforts to recover his mother erotically by romancing women who remind him of her (or perhaps her first representative, Fujitsubo). But this act of recovery is put to us precisely as an act of transgression by Genji toward his father specifically and social mores in general. This first relationship is the beginning of a series of transgressions where it is the act of transgression that provides the liveliness of the passage. What repeats in the *Genji* narrative is not just a number of love affairs that each point back to a founding first and lost love, but a series of present-time transgressions that gesture at covering, while keeping vital, the narrative's erotic, open secret; these are transgressions that mean to establish certain bonds.

On the one hand, Hikaru Genji expresses his love for Fujitsubo:

Now that Genji had come of age, the emperor no longer allowed him inside the [consort] Fujitsubo lady's blinds as he had done in the past. The boy expressed his feelings by playing his flute in harmony with the consort's koto when there was music, or sought consolation in the faint sound of her voice.<sup>32</sup>

On the other hand, Mizoguchi expresses his fascination for a graduate from his school who has entered naval engineering academy and who has returned, in uniform, to visit his old school. The handsome soldier-student has removed his jacket and sword, and is in another corner of the school grounds, wrestling:

From my pocket I took out the rusty knife that I used for sharpening my pencils; then I crept up to the fence, and on the back of the beautiful black scabbard of the sword I engraved several ugly cuts....<sup>33</sup>

Mishima makes his point with precision: Mizoguchi willfully defiles the beautiful sword that is the object of his admiration. Murasaki's passage is more convoluted, but arrives at the same point: Genji challenges his father for his most prized possession. Here Genji 'draws a cut' across the relationship between himself and his father by playing his flute in harmony to that of his father's young and beautiful lover.

These acts of transgression are inverted acknowledgments of the importance of certain relationships: Mizoguchi admires the young soldier whose sword he damages, while Genji acknowledges his relationship, complicated and deep, with his father by sharing desire for Fujitsubo, just as Genji and Tō no Chūjō will confirm their friendship by directing their passions (significant and frivolous) at times toward the same women. The transgression of Murasaki, although disruptive, proposes, however provisionally, to honor the rule of discretion. That is, it will make a gesture of regulating itself to the needs of social stability. The damage of Hikaru Genji's transgressions are slow to appear, but make their appearance in due time. No one could set fire to Fujiwara Michinaga's Tsuchimikado mansion and expect Murasaki to narrate it as a sincere search for beauty. Her fires are more coded in their narrative representations. Transgression for Mishima is, on the other hand, articulated as a participation in the disruptive 'pre-social' violence found at the deepest levels of the erotic impulse. His perspective is an inner and absolute one, not—intentionally not—socially moderated.

#### HOW TO ENCOUNTER BEAUTY SUBSTANTIVELY?

In seeking confirmation of human relationship, Mishima and Murasaki both explore questions such as: How do we encounter something or someone substantively? How can we look directly into the face of beauty? How do we possess our object of desire? How do we gain satisfaction? Both writers forge their answering narratives in terms of hierarchical power, that is, in order to establish contact with the other, we either submit to the other or overcome the other. Yūgao expires in the arms of a passionate Genji; Akashi is plucked from the provinces; Ukifune becomes Niou Miya's sexual captive for several days in his boat. Murasaki stays, enduring, at Genji's side for all her adult life, submitting most of the time, prevailing on occasion. We might even interpret the relationship between Rokujō no Miyasudokoro and Aoi no Ue (unwitting murderer and victim) as a type of violent, hierarchical intimacy.

In the case of Mishima's *Kinkakuji*, Mizoguchi describes Uiko's betrayal to the authorities of the location of her lover who has defected from the army:

... I was intoxicated by the pellucid beauty of Uiko's treachery. This girl was qualified to walk alone up those white stairs, proudly throwing out her chest. Her treachery was the same as the stars and the moon and the pointed cedars. In other words, she was living in the same world as we, the witnesses; and she was accepting the nature that surrounded us all. She was walking up

those steps as our representative. And I could not help thinking breathlessly: 'By her betrayal she has at last accepted me too. Now she belongs to me!'<sup>34</sup>

This passage—indeed the entire *Kinkakuji* does no differently—describes the mundane (common and commonly accessible) act of betrayal that by its reversal of loyalties is perhaps the human act most centrally tied to both submission and subjugation. Betrayal for Mishima, it seems to me, is a reversed circuit where the intimate energies of 'Master/Slave' are exchanged; that is, one human can commune with another through an inverted economy where betrayal exactly replaces loyalty, while carrying the same recognition of the importance of the relationship.

Through the ethic of *miyabi*, Murasaki subscribes to the belief that meaningful human bands are forged through the effort of understanding one's lover. For her, we live intensely—that is, we find love, beauty, and brief moments of satisfaction—by faith in the graces of sensitivity. The extent that we notice the minute and can be moved by *mono no aware* is an important measure of our humanity. *Mono no aware* is the mind/heart in transcendental flight—a spiritual state that Murasaki would place as prior to the narrow labyrinths of transgressive acts. For Murasaki, transgression causes a step-by-step karmic constricting of our fate (*sukuse*), whereas for Mishima transgression is a liberating moment that negates barriers. For Murasaki, the life of *miyabi* provides for attaining the most stable understanding. The training, restraint, and meticulous care necessary for this aesthetic discipline the heart even while making it more sensitive. We should note, however, that understanding and behavior according to the constrictions of *miyabi* fully incorporate hierarchy in human relationships in ways not all that dissimilar from Mishima's subjugation and submission; in other words, *miyabi* also organizes eroticism to make sense with the hierarchical lines of her society's network of relationships.

Mishima admired training and meticulousness in his art as much as Murasaki; his metaphors are stunningly crisp, his narratives paced and controlled. But he is not committed to the agenda of *miyabi* where symbols help to harmonize troubling psyche impulses. The difference between the two writers is what they demand of their words, based on what they believed words could do. Murasaki never doubts the power of words and other symbols that point to beauty. For her, clothing, fashion, poetry, perfume, a fingertip, the way of seating—all these are symbols that uphold her belief in the possibility of encountering beauty face to face. Beauty's face is not dauntingly abject. Murasaki does not claim that we cannot encounter beauty (in other words, that we cannot successfully desire), just that it has no lasting

presence and that, from the point of Buddhism as she interprets it, it is ultimately not a felicitous event.

While Murasaki asks us to suspend our wisdom for the flavor of the moment and anticipate hopefully that the distance between the one who desires and the desirable object can be satisfyingly collapsed, Mishima asserts the necessity of distance between the desiring subject and its object. Thus he insists on a gap between the hope for a meaningful encounter and the actual possibility for that encounter. Mizoguchi says, 'I realized that the problem lay not in trying to shorten the distance between myself and the object, but in maintaining this distance so that the object might remain an object.'<sup>35</sup> This, again, is squarely within Hegelian dialectic, where desire and self-consciousness require that the other remain fully separate in order for each to exist.<sup>36</sup> Mishima comes to this position, I would suggest, because he overconsiders the capacity of symbols:

Still, I do not want to say anything untrue, and there is no doubt that at the sight of her [Kashiwagi's lover's] white breast I was overcome by dizziness. The trouble was that I looked too carefully and too completely, so that what I saw went beyond the stage of being a woman's breast and was gradually transformed into a meaningless fragment.<sup>37</sup>

Mishima, as 'understanding', has tried 'asking of her [Beauty] what [he himself] cannot do,' namely, provide an authentic moment of encounter with one's object of desire. He wishes to put the significance of beauty and one's relationship to it entirely within the discursive field of 'Understanding'. In attempting this immoderate demand, he concludes that such a project loses the capacity to suspend logic (accept the limits of discursive language) when confronting a symbol, a suspension that would allow a representation to feel authentic. It is, in short, a problem (more precisely a critical doubt) of how metaphor works, and how much meaning it can bear. This was something that troubled him from an early age, and is eloquently considered in *Shi o Kaku Shōnen*, 1954.<sup>38</sup> Desirable objects appear to promise something, but Mishima felt that desire could not be satisfied within the universe of words. He looks elsewhere, namely, in the cultivation of physical action, to build his meaning for living. Murasaki's texts, on the other hand, suggest an alternation between the enjoyment of writing and wondering whether it is ultimately meaningful. With Murasaki, her doubts serve to make her language more beautiful, not less credible. Beauty is nurtured by leaving it its secrets. Mishima, on the other hand, seeks to expose its most living sinews, but ends up with a text that is as mysterious as the *Genji*.

## SUMMARY REMARKS

Murasaki and Mishima approach beauty as a disturbance to which they respond, and the two authors draw close to one another as they descend the vortex of discourse on desire. Both writers place into their discourse mediations that refer to a 'negative' of some type, and that organize and enhance the presence of eroticism in their texts: an ethics of *miyabi* in the case of Murasaki, while Mishima posits the powerful but unsettling act of betrayal as the relay between insignificant, self-existence, and the potency of beauty. Murasaki's Buddhist 'negative' within her aesthetics both moderates the reach and significance of desire, and expands its meaning on another level to incorporate a notion of suffering. Mishima's 'negative' is more closely allied to the erotic as a fundamental and fundamentally violent force, an interpretation that probably has more to do with European interpretations of eroticism than traditional Japanese ones. His language of eroticism tries to bridge the gap between the sexual body and language by taking squarely as a narrative issue the paradox of the desiring subject's violent reaction to beauty, then mediating this reaction through the structure of transgression and betrayal.

## NOTES

The author is an assistant professor in the Department of East Asian Languages and Literature, University of Wisconsin. An earlier version of this article was presented in honor of the retirement of Professor Sidney D. Brown at the Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs held at the University of Western Illinois, Macomb, on 24 September 1994. He wishes to thank the two anonymous readers for their helpful suggestions.

1. Roy Starrs traces this inclination toward taking a destructive relationship with one's object of desire to German nihilism, specifically Nietzsche. See Roy Starrs, *Deadly Dialectics: Sex, Violence and Nihilism in the World of Yukio Mishima*, University of Hawaii Press & Japan Library, Curzon Press, 1994. In the present article I will instead privilege the influence of French literatures in the Baudelaire tradition on Mishima. For an interesting consideration of sexuality in Mishima, see also Susan I. Napier, *Escape from the Wasteland: Romanticism and Realism in the Fiction of Mishima Yukio and Oe Kenzaburō*, Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1991.

2. Georges Bataille, *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality*, City Lights Books, San Francisco, 1986, pp. 38-39.

3. Bataille, pp. 144-45.

4. Bataille, p. 11.

5. Abe Akio, Akiyama Ken & Imai Gen'e, ed., *Genji Monogatari*, NKBZ 13, Shōgakusan, 1972, p. 247. The translation is slightly modified from Helen Craig McCullough, tr., *Genji & Heike: Selections from The Tale of Genji and The Tale of the Heike*, Stanford U.P., 1994, p. 206.

6. Mishima Yukio, *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, Knopf, New York, 1977, p. 11; *Kinkakuji*, in *Mishima Yukio Zenshū*, 10, Shinchōsha, 1973, p. 17.

7. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 21; *Kinkakuji*, p. 27.

8. Richard Bowring, tr., *Murasaki Shikibu: Her Diary and Poetic Memoirs*, Princeton U.P., 1982, p. 95; Fujioka Tadaharu et al., ed., *Izumi Shikibu Nikki, Murasaki Shikibu Nikki*,

*Sarashina Nikki*, *Sanuki no Suke Nikki*, NKZ 18, Shōgakukan, 1971, pp. 205–06.

9. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 48; *Kinkakuji*, p. 55.

10. Aileen Gatten, 'Death and Salvation in *Genji Monogatari*', in Aileen Gatten & Anthony Hood Chambers, ed., *New Leaves: Studies and Translations of Japanese Literature in Honor of Edward Seidensticker*, Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 1993, p. 8.

11. Gatten, p. 9.

12. Edward Seidensticker, tr., *The Tale of Genji*, Knopf, New York, 1976, p. 719; Abe, NKZ 15, 1974, pp. 495–96.

13. Abe, NKZ 16, 1975, p. 11.

14. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 152; *Kinkakuji*, pp. 162–63.

15. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 233; *Kinkakuji*, p. 245.

16. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 144; *Kinkakuji*, p. 154.

17. *Symposium*, 210a–d, quoted in Henry Staten, *Eros in Mourning: Homer to Lacan*, Johns Hopkins U.P., 1995, p. 3.

18. Julia Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Columbia U.P., 1984, p. 26.

19. Kristeva, p. 24.

20. Jin'ichi Konishi, *A History of Japanese Literature: Volume One. The Archaic and Ancient Ages*, Princeton U.P., 1984, pp. 15–16.

21. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Oxford U.P., 1977, p. 19.

22. Hegel, p. 19.

23. See, for example, Mishima Yukio, 'Reimon Radige', 'Raymond Radiguet', in *Zenshū*, 26, 1976, pp. 215–17.

24. Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Plato I: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus*, Loeb Classical Library 36, Harvard U.P., 1914, pp. 497 & 499.

25. Irving Singer, *The Nature of Love: I, Plato to Luther*, 2nd ed., University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 60. See also Plato, *Phaedrus*, pp. 471–505.

26. 'The essential point is that sex was not only a matter of sensation and pleasure, of law and taboo, but also of truth and falsehood, that the truth of sex became something fundamental, useful, or dangerous, precious or formidable: in short, that sex was constituted as a problem of truth.' Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, I, An Introduction*, Vintage Books, Random House, New York, 1990, p. 56.

27. Nakamura Shin'ichirō, *Irogonomi no Kōzō*, Iwanami Shinsho 319, 1985, pp. 112–13.

28. Although we could say that Confucian interest in discipline, and the tension within Confucianism about man's original nature are not so distant from Plato's interest in subduing wayward, base desires.

29. Julia Kristeva, *Proust and the Sense of Time*, Columbia U.P., 1993, p. 41.

30. The comment is made with regard to Georges Bataille's *My Mother*, in Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, Columbia U.P., 1987, p. 366. Kristeva's view derives its theoretical bases from Freud's essay 'On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 11, Hogarth Press, London, 1957.

31. Bowring, p. 49; NKZ 18, pp. 165–66.

32. *Genji & Heike*, pp. 39–40; Abe, NKZ 12, 1970, p. 125.

33. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 9; *Kinkakuji*, p. 15.

34. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 17; *Kinkakuji*, pp. 23–24.

35. *Golden Pavilion*, p. 102; *Kinkakuji*, p. 110.

36. Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Hegel's Dialectic of Self-consciousness', in *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, Yale U.P., 1976, p. 64.

37. *Golden Pavilion*, pp. 151–52; *Kinkakuji*, p. 162.

38. *Zenshū*, 9, pp. 257–74.