

Genji monogatari and *mono no aware*

Thesis: *Mono no aware* 物の哀れ, or simply *aware* 哀れ, is the central aesthetic of *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語, and the basis by which the reader is supposed to judge the actions of all characters.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bibliography of Asian Studies. Association for Asian Studies. 22 February 2005. 21 April 2005.
<<http://ets.umdl.umich.edu.libproxy.albany.edu/b/bas/>>

A subscription-only, Web-based database of journals, books, and analytics within the discipline of East Asian Studies. The majority of the texts referenced on the database are English-language. It is searchable by author, title, journal, and subject. It does not have scanned (or transcribed) copies of the journal articles readily available as on JSTOR (or Project MUSE), yet it includes more up-to-date citations of journals, while JSTOR only provides journals up until as far back as five years due to publication rights issues. It also provides citation for texts other than journals, which JSTOR cannot provide.

Harper, Thomas James. Motoori Norinaga's Criticism of the *Genji monogatari*: a study of the background and critical content of his *Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan, 1971.

A doctoral dissertation on a seminal work of criticism of *Genji monogatari*. It covers historical background of Japanese theories on literature before the composition of *Genji*, concurrent with *Genji*, and following. It also surveys criticism of the novel prior to Motoori's *Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi* 源氏物語玉の小櫛 organized by "early critical attention, Buddhist interpretations, the view of the court poets, and scholarly commentaries" (41) from the eleventh to the nineteenth century, as well as Motoori's "immediate predecessors" in *Genji* criticism. The survey contains, for the most part, summaries of the arguments as well as occasionally extensive quotations, with commentary on the arguments regarding particular works of criticism. All of the preceding should help the reader place Motoori's theories within context. The text on *Tama no ogushi* itself covers Motoori's life, career, development of critical theory which led to the composition of the work, its composition, and, finally, a long discussion of the work itself. The criticism of *Tama no ogushi* quotes it and its critics extensively, explicates certain aspects of the theory which a reader might find troublesome, and discusses the term and theory around *mono no aware* extensively.

There are three appendices to the dissertation, the first of which includes a translation of Motoori's essay "*Ōmune*" (which Harper translates as "The Intentions of the Novel") which is "about two-thirds of the first chapter of *Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi*" (161). The essay covers the main points of Motoori's theory on the interpretation of *Genji* in terms of *aware* rather than previous criticism which based its interpretation of the novel's intent through Confucian and Buddhist (non-Japanese) value systems. The

translation does not include the more extensive discussion of the term *mono no aware*, though the reader may glean much from Harper's discussion of the theory.

Kato Kazumitsu. "Some Notes on *mono no aware*." Journal of the American Oriental Society. 82.4 (Oct. – Dec., 1962): 558-559. JSTOR. University at Albany Library, Albany. 9 May 2005. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0003-0279%28196210%2F12%2982%3A4%3C558%2ASNOMNA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-J>>, <<http://www.jstor.org>>

This two-page article summarizes, very briefly, the definitions Motoori Norinaga gave to *mono no aware* and its uses in his essay "*Genji Monogatari Tama no Ogushi*." Kato then goes on to question the specific use of both *mono* and *aware* within the phrase, stating that rather than *mono* being "an auxiliary," "*aware* is a qualitative term which cannot exist by itself" as it is "modified by *mono* grammatically" through *mono*'s "[connection to] *aware* by a particle, . . . *no*." This slight adjustment to the grammatical emphases of the phrase may assist in identifying appropriate passages to support the above thesis. The article ends with a count of specific uses of *aware* within *Genji monogatari*. No *kanji* or *kana* are used in the article, instead all Japanese is romanized and in italics, possibly due to the date of publication.

Keene, Donald. The Pleasures of Japanese Literature. New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

A small volume which surveys lightly and in highly approachable language Japanese poetry, fiction, and theater. It is an introduction to the lay person to Japanese literature and culture. Little original text is provided, mostly brief quotes used to illustrate points. However, the initial chapter entitled "Japanese Aesthetics," in which Keene clearly describes notoriously difficult concepts, is useful in placing *mono no aware*, *Genji monogatari*, and Japanese criticism within Japanese cultural context for a Western reader.

Keene, Donald. Seeds in the Heart: Japanese literature from earliest times to the late sixteenth century. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1993.

Another survey by Keene of Japanese literature, this time in far greater detail and greater focus on works. Different texts, such as *Genji monogatari* are given their own chapters in which Keene breaks out the text, its criticism, and his own criticism of both. Once again, the prose is highly approachable and little assumption of foreknowledge regarding Japanese literature is made, and each chapter is highly annotated. Extensive bibliographies are located at the end of each chapter. The chapter on *Genji* quotes from both Whalen's and Seidensticker's translations after *romaji* passages to illustrate difficulty of translating *Genji* as well as the different tacks English translators take and the impact this has on the meaning of the text. As in *The Pleasures of Japanese Literature*, Keene quotes Motoori Norinaga's *Tama no ogushi*, and some of his criticism of the novel appears to be influenced heavily by Motoori's theories. The chapter is broken into eight sections, dealing with authorship, Murasaki's life, composition and style of *Genji*, historical background, story, characters, and why the text is not only

important but appealing for so many generations. The section on characters may be helpful in interpreting various characters' meaning/feelings behind their actions/words/responses.

“哀.” (#3580) *Dai Kan-wa jiten* 大漢和辭典 (The Great Chinese-Japanese Dictionary), Vol. 2. Morohashi Testuji 諸橋轍次, compiler. Tōkyō 東京: Taishūkan Shoten 大修館書店, 1987.

Provides pronunciation, *kun* and *on* readings, and use; an extensive entry within a comprehensive reference work. Lists multiple character variables, common and uncommon, supported by quotation from classical texts complete with glosses of the Chinese to aid the reader. The very first entry under the character is あわれむ/あわれ (*awaremu/aware*), the term under discussion in the thesis above, but reading of the quoted texts is difficult, even with the glosses provided.

Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部. *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語. Japanese Text Initiative. Transcriber Eiichi Shibuya. University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center and the University of Pittsburgh East Asian Library. 29 June 1999. 10 May 2005.
<<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/genji/index.html>>

A Website which provides the *monogatari* in the original Japanese, modernized Japanese, and the original Japanese text in *romaji*. The titles in the romanized section are translated into English, but the rest of the text in the section is romanized Japanese. There is an option to view all three versions of the text in parallel frames, which may aid comprehension. Prompts above each sub-chapter allow the reader to change the view in other parallel frames to match the text being read in the frame of focus. For instance, if the reader is scanning through the modernized version, she can select the “Classical Text” link above that particular sub-chapter in order to compare the two texts. The site does not, however, provide any commentary on the text, though there is a bare minimum of character age indications given at the start of each sub-chapter. The original Japanese text also lacks glosses which other publications of the *monogatari* have included to aid the reader. However, the unique format of the stacked frames, and links to various chapters make reference to specific sections of the work easier, and the romanization of the original Japanese may assist non-native readers.

Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部. *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語. Nihon koten bungaku zenshū 日本古典文学全集, Vol. 12-17. Eds. Abe Akio 阿部秋生, Akiyama Ken 秋山虔, and Imai Gen'e 今井源衛. Tōkyō 東京: Shōgakkan 小学館, 1970-1976.

While the original Japanese text does not appear to change from the Japanese Text Initiative's website to these six volumes, the glosses and commentary provided are vital to comprehension of the text. The modernized Japanese text, glossed original Japanese text, and Japanese commentary are all on the same page, commentary and modernization framing the original text. The *Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* also provides full-color reproductions of artwork associated with the text as well as of some early copies of the work, in-text line drawings illustrating certain scenes, and extensive appendices. The

appendices include iconography, genealogical charts, descriptions and line-drawing illustrations of Heian period noble living quarters, dress, modes of transport, etc. There are chronological charts of events within *Genji*, and extended indices of terms, etc. Much of the Heian-related material in Miner's *Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature* is the same material as found in the appendices. Each volume contains an introduction, as well as a colophon pasted into the very beginning of the volume of criticism of the text. While attempting to read the work in the original is exceedingly difficult, the multiple resources available within the volumes are incredibly useful for research purposes.

Murasaki Shikibu, Edward Seidensticker, trans. *The Tale of Genji*. New York: Knopf, 1978.

Genji monogatari in English translation. This is the translation to which most English-language criticism of the past few decades refers and quotes, which makes it useful as a reference when reading the criticism and as an aid when reading the text in Japanese. However, the English is somewhat stilted and many critics dislike the anachronisms which Seidensticker uses instead of perhaps simpler or more indirect phrases. It also lacks annotation. It would be preferable, perhaps, to utilize the newer, very well-received translation by Royall Tyler, who, according to critics, is closer in his English to the courtly vagueness of Murasaki's Heian-era Japanese.

Wallace, John R. "Tarrying with the Negative: Aesthetic Vision in Murasaki and Mishima." *Monumenta Nipponica*. 52.2 (Summer, 1997): 181-199. JSTOR. University at Albany Library, Albany. 9 May 2005. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0027-0741%28199722%2952%3A2%3C181%3ATWTNAV%3E2.0.CO%3B2-U>> <<http://www.jstor.org>>

Wallace explores the "negative" aspects of the aesthetic of *mono no aware* as shown in Murasaki's *Genji monogatari* and Mishima Yukio's *Kinkakuji*. He incorporates Buddhist criticism with *aware* criticism, claiming *aware* is an illustration of "the Buddhist teaching of the radical emptiness of material existence" which is inherently transient (181). Wallace's incorporation of Buddhist thought, as well as the exploration of the association of great beauty with great suffering as depicted in *Genji* could be useful as a non-Motoori approach to the aspect of *aware* in *Genji*. However, his prose is dense with literary critical theory of the kind seen more often in English departments (reference to Bakhtin, Plato, and other favorites of that particular discipline) and therefore lacks clarity at certain points in his argument.

Yoda Tomiko. "Fractured Dialogues: Mono no aware and Poetic Communication in The Tale of Genji." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. 59.2 (Dec. 1999): 523-557. JSTOR. University at Albany Library, Albany. 9 May 2005. <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0073-0548%28199912%2959%3A2%3C523%3AFDMNAA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>>, <<http://www.jstor.org>>

A detailed criticism of *Genji monogatari* based on Motoori's theories regarding *mono no aware*. Yoda focuses her criticism on the poetic exchanges in the novel, and the specific

language within the poems, such as the exchange between Genji and Lady Fujitsubo, in depth. The change of meaning behind the conversation possible in communication through poetry is the source of the fracturing in Yoda's title. The application of meticulous analysis of specific word use is far more effective than Wallace's reliance on Western critical theory, allowing for exploration of character motivations and feelings at a much deeper level.