

Nativist Hermeneutics: The Interpretative Strategies of Motoori Norinaga and Fujitani Mitsue

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This paper analyzes a few hermeneutical strategies used by two major members of the Nativist movement (*Kokugaku* 国学), Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) and Fujitani Mitsue 富士谷御杖 (1768-1823) in addressing the notion of Japanese poetry. While contributing to the development of the field of Japanese philology, Motoori articulated a philosophy of transparency in which the voice of language was perceived as the immediate sound of transcendent signs. Motoori discussed this issue in texts such as *Ashiwake Obune* (*A Small Boat Amidst the Reeds*, 1757), *Aware Ben* (*A Discussion on Aware*, 1758), *Shibun Yōryō* (*The Essentials of the Tale of Genji*, 1763), and *Isonokami no Sasamegoto* (*Personal Views on Poetry*, 1763). Fujitani Mitsue, on the other hand, opposed Motoori's notions of spontaneity, immediacy, and transparency in works such as *Makoto Ben* (*An Explanation of the Truth of True Words*, 1802), *Hyakunin Isshu Tomoshihi* (*Light on The One Poem by a Hundred Poets*, 1804), *Kadō Kaisei* (*Sobering to the Way of Poetry*, 1805), and *Kadō Kyōyō* (*The Essentials of the Way of Poetry*, 1817). In *Kitabe Zuinō* (*Kitabe's Poetic Treatise*) Fujitani challenged Motoori's interpretative model of "frontside-underside" (*omote/ura*), adding a third interpretative possibility (*sakai* or "border") that questioned Motoori's belief in the straightforward recoverability of meaning. This paper is a simple prolegomenon to a history of Japanese hermeneutics that has yet to be written.

Key words: HERMENEUTICS, SPEECH, SIGNS, PATTERN WORDS, VOICE, REPRESENTATION, ETYMOLOGIES, EXPRESSION INDICATION, LANGUAGE, *MONO NO AWARE*, INTERSUBJECTIVITY, DISCLOSURE, AESTHETICS, TRANSPARENCY, TIME, *KOTODAMA*.

1 MOTOORI NORINAGA'S HERMENEUTICS OF DISCLOSURE

1.1 Speech

When confronted with the articulation of a discourse on poetry, the Edo scholar Motoori Norinaga insisted upon the need to clearly discern the major components of poetry before analyzing the role played by poetic language in the contingency of the present. Motoori singled out the categories of "voice" (*kowe* 声) and "written signs" (*aya* 文) cooperating in the creation of a "poetic form" (*sama* 様 or *sugata* 姿), that once externalized, would work towards the formation of an intersubjective model of communication (*mono no aware* 物のあはれ). The privileging of the voice in the process of signification Motoori shared with other scholars of the Nativist movement that his thought deeply contributed to shape. These scholars all participated in the belief that language had the power not only of representing but also producing external reality. Words and things were mutually interchangeable (*kotodama* 言霊/事霊="the spirit of words/things"). The transparency of "mythical language"—*koto* in Japanese meaning both "thing" (事) and "word" (言)—provided Nativist scholars with powerful arguments in favor of an allegedly sacred origin of voice, "a divine sign expressed in

words.”¹ The lifting up of words (*kotoage*) in the context of liturgical ceremonies transferred material reality back to its original sacredness from which, according to the Nativists, it had been separated by thick layers of culture.² The recovery of correct naming, therefore, was paramount to the recovery of the original, divine voice. The philologist was then entrusted with uncovering “the true voice of the spirit of language” (*kotodama no shingon* 言霊の真言)³ that was transmitted through ancient poetry. Homophony supported the burden of proof for the Nativist hermeneutical act that entrusted “ancient words” (*furukoto* 古言) with the voicing of “ancient facts/history” (*furukoto* 古事).

In a major treatise on poetry, *Personal Views on Poetry* (*Isonokami no Sasamegoto* 石上私淑言, 1763), Motoori emphasized the futility of applying the hermeneutical enterprise to scriptive traces—the imported mass of Chinese signs—before understanding the meaning of the voice⁴ to which, Motoori argued, Chinese characters had been improperly attached. He took issue with the graphically oriented struggle of philologists who “read foreign characters in Yamato language” (*wakun* 和訓). In Motoori’s opinion, such an act privileged the sign (*moji* 文字)—the character for poetry, *uta* 于多, for example—rather than focusing attention on the native sound that Motoori recorded in *man’yōgana* as 于多 and that he argued, “was expressed in words since the age of the gods” (*kamiyo yori ihikitareru kotoba* 神世よりいひ来たれる詞). Motoori compared words (*kotoba* 詞) to the root of signification and explained signs (*moji*) as the tree’s twigs. While the sound was “the master” (*shu* 主), its written representation was nothing but “a servant” (*bokujū* 僕従), “a borrowed temporary device” (*kari no mono* 仮 [借] の物) that could easily be replaced by a different Chinese character, thus making writing an unreliable object of study.⁵ The fracture of meaning following the improper association of a foreign script with the native language had already been a major concern of the philosopher Ogyū Sorai 荻生徂徠 (1666-1728), whose theories Motoori knew through the mediation of his teacher Hori Keizan 堀景山 (1688-1757). It was Keizan, who in

1 This expression is Keichū’s definition of *kotodama*. In the *Rectification of Japanese Names* (*Waji Shōranshō* 和字正濫抄), he noticed that in the *Man’yōshū*, the characters of “word” and “thing” were interchangeable in the recording of the word *kotodama*. From this observation he derived the theory of the coextension of expression and event, the linguistic and the ontological. Toyoda Kunio, *Nihonjin no Kotodama Shisō*, KGB 483 (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1980), pp. 184-185. Unless otherwise specified, all translations are mine.

2 See Roy A. Miller, “The ‘Spirit’ of the Japanese Language,” in *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 3: 2 (Summer 1977), pp. 251-298.

3 This expression is coined by Motoori Norinaga, who developed his argument in the *Uiyamabumi*, *Kojikiden*, *Kuzuhana*, etc. Toyoda, *Nihonjin no Kotodama Shisō*, pp. 188-189. Motoori clearly stated the preeminence of “both heart and words” (*kokoro mo kotoba mo*) of the poetic voice (*uta*) in understanding “the spontaneously risen meaning of the age of the gods of our august land” (*waga mikuni no onozukara no kamiyo no kokorobae* わが御国のおのずからの神代の心ばへ). Hino Tatsuo, ed. *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, SNKS 60 (Tokyo: *Shinchōsha*, 1983), p. 414.

4 The importance of the “voice” (*uta no kowe* 詠の聲) in “the recitation of poetry” (*utayomi*) had already been stressed in medieval times by the poet Fujiwara no Shunzei 藤原俊成 (1114-1204), who emphasized “how dependent poetry was on the voice” in his poetic treatise *Korai Fūteishō* 古来風林抄. According to Shunzei, the prolonged sustaining of the voice in the vocal articulation of poetry explained the reason why “short poems” (*mijikauta* 短歌) were often called “long poems” (*nagauta* 長歌) in earlier poetic treatises. Such practice, which the *Man’yōshū* discredited, derived from the custom of lingering over the sound of a short 31-syllable poem, and of “running” in the reading of a longer poem. The *Man’yōshū*’s more mechanical explanation was based instead on the count of syllables—31 being the number reserved to “short poems” and “envoys” (*hanka* 反歌). Hashimoto Fumio, et al., eds. *Karonshū*, NKBS 50 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1975), pp. 298-299.

5 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 264 and 316-317.

his *The Inexpressible* (*Fujingen* 不尽言) had noticed the awkwardness of translating Japanese language into Chinese characters, thus providing those alien shapes with native meaning (*wakun* 和訓).⁶ Motoori had taken up his teacher's lesson in an earlier poetic treatise, *A Small Boat Amidst the Reeds* (*Ashiwake Obune* 排声小船, 1757), in which he attacked the practice of earlier commentators to analyze the character *uta* 歌 rather than its sound, not realizing that “*kanji* are harmful to the language of our country”.⁷

Motoori's privileging of speech/action over representation/object was rooted in his attempt to distinguish native speech from the “alien” continental script inherited from China.⁸ Paradoxically, he based his defense of the lyric nature of native poetry (*uta* 于多), to be distinguished from Chinese poetic language (*shi* 詩), on the canonical Chinese definition of poetry that appears in the *Book of Documents* (*Shu jing* 書經): “the poem (*shi*) articulates what is on the mind intently (*zhi*); song makes language (*yan*) last long” 詩言志歌永言.⁹ The original text explains poetry as the articulation of the poet's intentionality by a special language whose musical pattern makes the word last a long time through the chanting of “stretched out” words. Motoori, however, forced the original by disjoining the sentence as if the author was dealing with two different kinds of activities, one more prosaic resulting from an act of will, and the other more spontaneous following the singing impulse of a lyrical heart. It goes without saying that Motoori read the first clause—“poetry expresses intent (*kokorozashi*)”—as the definition of Chinese poetry, while using the second—“the act of singing (*utafu wa*) makes language last long”—to characterize the native voice.¹⁰

The “sustained stretching of the voice”¹¹ (*nagamu* 詠) becomes for Motoori a distinctive mark of the native *uta* that keeps it apart from the intellectualistic bent of Chinese poetry aiming at “expressing intentionality” (*kokorozashi wo ifu* 言志). As Keichū 契沖 (1640-1701) had already noted in his annotation of the *Kokinshū*, the *Commentary to the Excess Material of the Kokinshū* (*Kokin Yozai Shō* 古今餘材抄, 1692), *shi* stops at the level of intentionality (*kokorozashi no koto* 心ざしの言 or “the words of the will”), while *uta* implies the presence of the language of music. However, Keichū denied any basic difference between the two

6 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 316, n. 1.

7 Sasaki Nobutsuna, ed. *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, 7 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1957), p. 254.

8 In the West as well, the notion of “the spirit of language” found its moment of glory contemporaneously with the formation of European nations. A need for the creation of collective identities and the orchestration of ideological consensus were essential to the formation of linguistic theories centered on the power of a national spirit. The German philosopher Ernst Cassirer has pointed out that the most explicit formulation of the notion of “the spirit of language” in the West appeared in a work by J. Harris entitled *Hermes or a Philosophical Inquiry Concerning Universal Grammar* (1751) in which we read: “We shall be led to observe, how nations like Single Men, have their peculiar Ideas; how these peculiar Ideas become the genius of their language, since the Symbol must of course correspond to its Archetype; how the wisest nations, having the most and best Ideas, will consequently have the best and most copious Languages.” Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, 1: *Language* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 144. The ideas of *Geist* and *Genie* came to dominate the German linguistic scene from J. Grimm's *Lexicon* to J. G. Herder's *Kritisches Wildchen*.

9 Katō Jōken, ed., *Shokyō, Jō* [SKT 25] (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1983), p. 43. This translation by Stephen Owen appears in his *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 26.

10 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 323. Likewise, Motoori read the statement from the *Record of Ritual* as follows: “Poetry expresses its intent; the act of singing sustains (*nagamuru*) the voice for a long time”. *Idem*.

11 This is the definition given of the *shimonidan* verb *nagamu* in Ono Susumu, et als., eds. *Iwanami Kogo Jiten* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), p. 946.

forms of lyric, arguing that “in the *Chronicles of Japan, Continued (Shoku Nihongi)* and in the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves (Man'yōshū)* songs (*uta*) are called poems (*shi*).”¹²

The recovery of the native voice thus became a top item in Motoori's philological agenda that underlined the fracture between what he called “the voice of writing” (*moji no kowe* 文字の音, *ji no kowe* 字の音) forming “scriptive meaning” (*jigi* 字義, *moji no giri* 文字の義理), and the “voice of speech” permeating “local meaning” (*kotoba no kokoro* 言の意, *konata no kotoba no gi* 此方の言の義). This defense of song's orality was based on the realization of the musical origin of poetry as a performative act.¹³ In order to prove the primacy of the voice in the process of signification, Motoori attacked the philological methodology that explained local terms according to the etymology of Chinese characters because of the discrepancy between signifiers and signifieds.¹⁴ Motoori addressed his criticism against philologists, such as Hosokawa Yūsai 細川幽齋 (1534-1610) and Keichū, whose interpretation of the word “poem” (*uta*) followed the explanation given for the Chinese character “to sing” (*ge* 歌) in Liu Xi's 劉熙 *Explanation of Words (Shi ming* 釈名): the etymon of *ka* (歌) was found in the character *ke* (柯) meaning “branches,” since “the upward and downward modulation [= pitch] of the singing voice was like the movement of leaves on a branch [at the blow of the wind].”¹⁵

Motoori faulted Japanese scholars with collapsing the meaning of native expression—in this instance the phoneme *uta*—with a scriptive trace whose origin might well have been grounded in Liu Xi's interpretation but whose adaptation to the local voice remained essentially an alienating, fracturing act. According to him, the freezing of speech in writing implied a series of contextual translations that distanced the native signifier—graphically represented in *man'yōgana* (于多 for *uta*)—from its scriptive representation (歌). This explains Motoori's skepticism towards the etymological enterprise (*goshaku* 語釈) that was alleged to recapture a universal meaning from an alien root of signification.

When confronted with the explanation of the etymon of the native voice for “poem” (*uta*), Motoori rehearsed the theory that he had learned from the *Proofs to Understand the Chronicles of Japan (Nihon Shoki Tsūshō* 日本書紀通証), a commentary to the *Nihon Shoki* by the Ise Shintō scholar Tanigawa Kotosuga 谷川士清 (1709-1776). In this work Kotosuga quoted a senior colleague, Tamaki Masahide 玉木正英, saying that “the act of singing, reciting a poem aloud” (*utafu* 歌ふ) was related to “the act of appealing to someone” (*utafu* 訴). Hori Keizan further explained the etymology of “song” as “an expression of grievances

12 Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, et als. eds., *Keichū Zenshū* 8, (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), p. 7.

13 The musical aspect of “song” (*uta*) was presented as the genealogical moment of poetry in the major poetic treatises of Motoori's time. See, for example, the beginning of the first chapter, “The Origin of Poetry” (*Kagen Ron*), of Kada Arimaro's (1706-1751) *Eight Essays on the Country's Poetry (Kokka Hachiron*, 1742): “Poetry sustains the voice for a while, while clearing the mind.” Hashimoto Fumio, Ariyoshi Tamotsu, Fujihira Haruo, eds. *Karonshū*, NKBZ 50 (Tokyo: Shōgakusan, 1975), p. 533.

14 Motoori was indebted on this point to Kamo no Mabuchi's *Essay on Poetic Epithets (Kanji Kō)* where an attack was levelled against those who “without knowing the past of the imperial reigns, explain the language of this land with Chinese phonetics.” Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, ed. *Kamo no Mabuchi Zenshū*, 8 (Tokyo: Zoku Gunsho Ruijū Kanseikai, 1978), p. 8.

15 Hosokawa Yūsai followed Liu Xi's explanation in the *Eiga no Taigai Shū*, a commentary of Fujiwara Teika's poetic treatise *Eiga no Taigai*. Keichū gave the same quotation in the *Kokin Yozai Shō*. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 324, n. 2; Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, 8, p. 7.

piling up inside the heart to be relieved in order to dispel its gloom.”¹⁶ Poetic signification was rooted in the articulation of an excess of feeling that the heart could hardly contain. Poetry, therefore, acted as a safety valve that would guarantee the person’s physical and mental well being. However, Motoori refused to either corroborate or reject his teacher’s theory, dismissing the matter by stating that “now there is nothing more we can say about it” (*kono hoka ifubeki koto imada kamugaezu* この外いふべきこといまだ考へず).

In a later work addressed to beginning scholars, the *First Steps into the Mountain* (*Uhiyamabumi* 宇比山踏), Motoori openly voiced his distrust of the etymological method, stating that “etymologies are not that essential...and they do not deserve too much scholarly attention.”¹⁷ Evidently Motoori was distrustful of a method that would attempt to recapture meaning from the root of a scriptive trace from which meaning had originally been fractured. Therefore, he encouraged a more historical approach to the study of language that would analyze temporal changes in the usage of words and of their attributed meanings. As he stated in the *Uhiyamabumi*, “more than being concerned with the original meaning (*moto no kokoro* 本の意) of such and such a word, we should think to which uses such words were put by the ancients, and we should clarify what meaning such and such a word had at that time.”¹⁸ If the etymological enterprise could find a justification, this was limited to the uncovering of the roots of speech, the study of native words whose transcription in an alien script was purely phonetic (*man’yōgana*).

As an example of the etymologist of the native voice at work, Motoori’s philological explanation of the “act of singing” is particularly eloquent. He focused on the several Chinese characters—読/誦/作—that were associated with the sound *yomu* (与牟 in *man’yōgana*) indicating, in Motoori’s words, “the act of reading/making a poem by having the voice imitate words/concepts already in use (*moto yori sadamarite aru tokoro no kotoba wo ima manebite kuchi ni ifu* 本より定まりてあるところの辞を今まねびて口にいふ)...as in the case of counting numbers (*mono no kazu wo kazufuru wo 物の数を数ふるを*)...without any melody attached to it or any particular intonation (*utawazu shite* うたはずして).”¹⁹

The presence of melody or intonation, on the other hand, explains the expression “to sing a poem” (*uta wo utafu* 歌を歌ふ), with particular regard to an ancient composition that is not a creative act on the reciter’s part. Motoori reminds us that the sound *utafu* 于多布 (“to sing”) was also conveyed by the character *ei* 詠, whose other reading, *nagamuru* (奈我牟流, “to sing/to sigh”), becomes Motoori’s ground for an act of philological bravery. He explains the poetic act (*nagamuru*) as “a long reverberation of the voice” (*kowe wo nagaku hiku* 声を長く引く) expressing the “lamenting heart lost in deep thoughts” (*monoomohi shite nageku koto* 物思ひして嘆くこと). Motoori related the act of singing (*nagamuru*) to the act of sighing (*nageku* 奈宜久), which, according to what Tanigawa Kotosuga and Kamo no Mabuchi had previously argued, derived from the expression “a long breath” (*nagaiki* 長息).²⁰ As Motoori himself had pointed out in the *Kojikiden*, “a lament (*nageki*) was the shortening (*tsuzumari*)

16 Quoted in Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Zenshū*, p. 320, n. 5.

17 Yoshikawa Kōjirō, Satake Akihiro, Hino Tatsuo, eds. *Motoori Norinaga*, NST 40 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), p. 525.

18 Yoshikawa Kōjirō, et als., *Motoori Norinaga*, p. 526.

19 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 228-230.

20 Hisamatsu Sen’ichi, *Kamo no Mabuchi Zenshū*, 8, pp. 173-174.

of a long breath (*nagaiki*). It was also the shortening of “a long life” (*nagaiki* 長生) since, as Kaibara Ekiken 貝原益軒 (1630-1714) had recorded in his *Japanese Etymologies* (*Nihon Shakumyō* 日本釈名), lending credit to a widespread popular etymology, “the living (*iki-taru*) human being has breath (*iki*); with death there is no breath.”²¹ “To sustain the breath” (*iki wo nagaku suru* 息を長くする) in poetry meant to reproduce semantically the process of life at the time when “the shortening of breath” deriving from human emotions threatened the body’s organic functions.

The complex web of signification emanating from the naming of poetry included a pneumatological theory of existence that made breath the major component of human life, translating sighs of regret and relief into the articulations of poetry. Poetic language restores life to a body deeply threatened by overwhelming passions. Poetry is, then, defined as “the spontaneous sigh of relief following the deep movement of the heart, the clearing of a gloomy disposition.”²² Several organs and senses are engaged in the poetic process. In particular, Motoori singled out the role played by the voice (*kowe*) that transforms the deep breath (*nagaiki*) in exclamatory particles—*ana* 阿那, *aya* 阿夜, *aa* 阿々, *aware* 阿波礼—which, as we will see later, are at the center of Motoori’s concept of intersubjectivity. The eye also—Motoori continues—came to play a fundamental role in the process of poetic signification starting from the time of the *Senzaishū* and *Shinkokinshū*, when *nagamuru* came to include the meaning of “to stare at an object.” The fixed gaze of the observer further contributed to the depressed state of the man “sunk in deep thoughts” to which the word *nagamuru* also refers.²³ By combining all the different meanings that make up the Japanese word for poetry, the poetic act could then be defined in some Heideggerian fashion as “the voicing of the deep breath of the long life of a still, pensive Being” (*nagaiku* 奈我以久 / *nageku* 奈宜久 *Inagamuru* 奈我牟流).²⁴

The same distrust for the written word that sets apart Motoori from several generations of philologists can be seen in Motoori’s reconstruction of the etymology of the word “Yamato” 夜麻登. First conceived as the name of the geographical area where the capital was located, it eventually became a general term including in its meaning the entire land of Japan (*ame no shita no sōmyō* 天の下の惣名). Motoori challenges the explanation given to this name in the *Private Documents on the Chronicles of Japan* (*Nihongi Shiki* 日本紀私記), a record of commentaries on the *Nihon Shoki* compiled during the Heian period. According to this work, after the separation of heaven and earth, people were forced to live in the mountains since the ground had not yet solidified, still remaining in a muddy stage. This would explain the large number of “footprints left in the mountains” (*yamaato* 山跡) from which the name Yamato 山跡 allegedly derived. Moreover—the document continues—since in ancient times “to live, to dwell” was indicated by the character *to* 止 (“to stop”), Yamato 山止 also means “to dwell in the mountains.”²⁵

21 Ekiken Kai, *Ekiken Zenshū*, 1 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankō Kai, 1945), p. 40.

22 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 341.

23 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 244-246.

24 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 338-343.

25 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 364. Kitamura Kigin accepted this theory in his commentary to the *Kokinshū*. Yamagishi Tokuhei, ed. *Hachidaishū Zenchū*, 1 (Tokyo: Yūseidō, 1960), p. 7.

Motoori contends that according to the eighth-century mythological records, the early history of a not yet solidified land preceded the birth of the two ancestral gods and, therefore, the Japanese land (*Ooyashimaguni* 大八洲国) could not have been created. He argues that, since there was no textual proof of people living in the mountains during the first stage of human history, the argument advanced in the *Nihongi Shiki* must be rejected. Keichū, Motoori admits, was already very critical of an interpretation that would single out only one land, the Yamato province, as the place where the ground had not yet solidified. However, by still accepting the theory that the name Yamato derived “from the many traces left by people in the mountains since the Yamato province was surrounded on four sides by mountains,”²⁶ Keichū was blinded to the fact that the explanation was built on Chinese characters—Yamato 山跡—that were meant to be taken phonetically rather than literally. Motoori also pointed out that this incorrect interpretation caused the malpractice of wrong intonation during poetry meetings in which the singer would linger on the word Yamato as if it was made of two words, *yama* and *ato*.²⁷

Motoori also discarded as “modern philosophizing” (*nochi no yo no gakumonzata* 後世学問沙汰) and “pretended smartness” (*sakashidachitaru setsu* 賢しだちたる説) the theory that explained Yamato as a contraction of “Ya(shi)ma(mo)to” 八洲元 or “the original land among the eight islands.” Motoori grounds his rejection on the fact that, unlike the *Nihon Shoki*, the *Kojiki* states that the first island of what we know today as the Japanese archipelago created by the ancestral deities was Awaji, while Yamato—which is the Honshū island—was the last. Too much reliance on a work centered around the rhetoric of written embellishment (*kazari* 潤色), such as the *Nihon Shoki*, at the expense of the natural simplicity (*sunaho* 古質) of the pure word as expressed in the *Kojiki*—Motoori continues—leads to the loss of the signifying codes that were in use during the age of the gods.²⁸

Moreover, Motoori noticed that the interpretation of Yamato as an auspicious name (*kagō* 嘉号) attached to a sound that was destined to become the signifying mark of the entire land, wrongly privileged the debates that originated with the need to find a proper character for Yamato (*moji no sata* 文字の沙汰), rather than explaining what for Motoori counted the most, the reason for the voice of the word (*kotoba* 言).²⁹

Then, where should we be looking for the correct etymology of the sound “Yamato”? Of course, in the oldest native songs, such as in the following, which the *Kojiki* attributes to the legendary Yamato Takeru no Mikoto:

Yamato wa	Yamato is
Kuni no mahoroba	The highest part of the land;
Tatanazuku	The mountains are green partitions
Aogaki	Lying layer upon layer.
Yamagomoreru	Nestled among the mountains,
Yamatoshi uruwashi	How beautiful is Yamato! ³⁰

26 Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, 8, p. 6.

27 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 365-367.

28 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 368-369.

29 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 369-370.

30 The English translation is by Donald L. Philippi, trans. *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), p. 248. The original text appears in Nishimiya Kazutami, ed. *Kojiki*, SNKS 27 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979), p. 169.

Being a land surrounded by mountains—“the green fences” that, according to another poem quoted by Motoori, “shield” the land protecting it from the outside³¹—Yamato 山処 simply means “mountainous place”. North, on the back of this land lies the Yamashiro province 山背—today’s Kyoto prefecture—that literally means “on the back of the mountains.”³² The poetic voice restores credibility to the etymological enterprise whose relation to the written sign threatens to sink it into discredit.

1.2 Signs

I will now address the issue of Motoori’s inscription of the voice into the symbolism of the sign, as well as his views on the relationship that scriptive signs have with the vocal articulation of speech, the presence of the unseen, and the external materiality of the world. The latter stands at the bottom of Motoori’s priorities because of the great attention paid to the seen by Neo-Confucian pragmatists whom Motoori targeted in his nativist philosophy. Motoori was concerned with the cherry blossom as voice and scriptive trace rather than as firewood. He, therefore, privileged the language of aesthetics (*adagoto*) over the language of practicality (*jitsuyō*). The former was the result of a combination of what he called “pattern words” (*aya* 文), the unmediated expression of a pristine voice transmitting “the heart of things” (*koto no kokoro/mono no kokoro*). The latter was conveyed by “common words” (*tada no kotoba*), simplified signs communicating the “reason” (*kotowari*) and “meaning” (*i*) of the world of objects.³³

Motoori explained his privileging the poetic voice—the expression of “patterns”—on the grounds of what he called “the principle of spontaneity” (*jinen no myō* 自然の妙): a graphic visualization (*aya*) of speech, the translation of sound into “spontaneous expression” (*onozukara kotoba* おのずから詞) that goes well beyond the sphere of pedestrian skill (*takumite shika suru ni wa arazu* 巧みてしかするにはあらず). The pattern (*aya*) of such expression was the result of the “stretching of the poetic voice” (*kowe wo nagaku shi* 声を長くし).³⁴ In a move reminiscent of the Derridean critique of Western phonocentrism, Motoori argued that the formation of the semantic field of “pattern words” preceded the act of vocal articulation inasmuch as *aya* already structured the singing voice (*kowe*) of the living realm

31 The *Kojiki* attributes this poem to the consort of Emperor Nintoku, Iwanohine no Mikoto, who wrote it “at the entrance of Nara mountain”, during her journey to Yamashiro:

Ao ni yoshi	I pass by Nara
Nara wo sugi	Of the blue clay;
Odate	I pass by Yamato
Yamato wo sugi	Of the little shields.

Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 310; Nishimiya Kazutami, *Kojiki*, p. 210.

32 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 362-363.

33 At the beginning of the eleventh century, Fujiwara Michitoshi 藤原道俊 (1047-1099) mentioned “the needlework like” (*nuhimono* 縫物) nature of the sign (*kotoba*), a “brocade pattern” (*nishiki nuhimono* 錦織物) that Michitoshi considered a major component of poetry together with “heart” (*kokoro*) and “voice” (*kowe*). Fujiwara no Shunzei quotes Michitoshi’s poetics in his *Korai Fūtei shō*. Hashimoto Fumio, *Karonshū*, pp. 175-176.

34 In the *Isonokami no Sasamegato* Motoori argues that whereas the common word for expressing sadness would be a simple repetition of the adjective “sad” (*kanashi kanashi* 悲し悲し), only the spontaneously arising sigh of sadness—“Oh, how sad, no, no...” (*ara kanashi ya nō nō* あら悲しやなふなふ)—can liberate the heart from gloom and convey the depth of human sensitivity” (*fukaki aware* 深きあはれ). Hino Tatsuo, ed. *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, SNKS 60 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1983), pp. 306-308.

(*ujō* 有情).³⁵ This “specialized” language—the language of creation spoken by all living creatures—provided a common, universal ground that tamed the violent threat of difference and brought the other back to the source of signification.

When we look at Chinese etymologies³⁶ of the character that Motoori used to indicate the word “pattern” and its most distinguished extensions—“letters” and “literature”—we read that *aya* (Ch. *wen*; Jpn. *fumi*, *bun*) “consists of intersecting strokes, representing a crisscross pattern,”³⁷ as well as “an image in writing of the shape of the things written about.”³⁸ These two definitions include both the symbolic and the syntactic/semantic aspects of “literary patterns,”³⁹ and emphasize the fictional nature of the sign that subsumes under its representational power the “natural qualities” or “inner substances” (*zhi* 質) of the objects of representation. The privileging of the “likely”⁴⁰ over the closure of mimetic reproduction

35 “Not only human beings, but all sentient beings including wild animals have poetry (*uta*) in their voice. We should remember the passage in the Preface to the *Kokinshū* that says, ‘Listening to the voice of the nightingale singing on the cherry blossom, or to the croaking of frogs living in the water, which living creature, as long as it is alive, does not sing its poem?’. The presence of patterns in the harmonious, crying voice of even birds and insects makes all their voices poetry.” Motoori Norinaga, *Isonokami no Sasamegoto* 1. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 252-253. Hino Tatsuo interprets the word *aya* simply as “beauty” (*usukushisa*). However, the matter seems to be more complicated by the very citation that Mr. Hino gives in his commentary to Motoori’s essay. He quotes a passage from Ogyū Sorai that an entry from Motoori’s diary proves to have been known to Motoori before he wrote *Isonokami no Sasamegoto*. The passage says, “Language is a pattern of words (*koto no bun*). Language struggles to become a pattern. How does it struggle to become a pattern? By becoming the word of the sage.” Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 253, n. 5.

36 Although Motoori might not have approved of this hermeneutical move for the reasons stated in the section above, the reader will bear with me so as to articulate with words what Motoori reduced to the concept of “spontaneity”.

37 This is the etymology provided in the most ancient Chinese etymological dictionary, the *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (*Explanations of Simple and Compound Characters*, ca. A.D. 100) by Xu Shen. Here we read that Can Jie, a scribe in the service of the Yellow Emperor, devised the system of Chinese writing by observing the prints of birds and other animals on the ground, thus representing graphically the configuration of things by a process of analogy. Quoted in James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 7. See also François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive: Des Catégories Originales de l’Interprétation Poétique dans la Tradition Chinoise* (*Contribution à une Réflexion sur l’Altérité Interculturelle*) (Paris: École Française d’Extrême-Orient, 1985), p. 27.

38 This etymology appears in the *Book of Changes* (*Zhouyi*), according to which Pao Xi traced the first scriptural marks—the eight trigrammes of the *Book of Changes*—in order to communicate with the power of the universe (*shenming*) after noticing the marks (*wen*) on the body of birds and other animals. Quoted in Haun Saussy, “Syntax and Semantics in the Definition of *Wen*.” Paper Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies (Boston, March 27, 1994), p. 8. See also François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, p. 26.

39 “Le terme de *wen* qui a servi de noyau à l’élaboration de la notion de littérature en Chine se prête ainsi à une double enquête, sémantique et symbolique.” François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, p. 22.

40 Likewise, in medieval Western poetics, fiction (Lat. *factio*) was related to the act of “pretending” (*ingere*), or of “coming up with a composition that is not true” (*excogitare et componere quod verum non est*). Uguccone da Pisa, as quoted by Sergio Cecchin in Dante Alighieri, *Opere Minori*, 1 (Turin: Utet, 1983), p. 478, n. 9. The human understanding of the divine process occurs within the strict limitations of a privileged poetic language that reproduces god’s activity (*poiein* = “to make”, *poire* = “to compose/create”, “poetry”, “poet”) by using grammatical, syntactical, and rhetorical rules. The Florentine poet Dante defines poetry as “a fabrication created through rhetoric and music” (*que nihil aliud est quam fictio rethorica musicaque poita*). *De Vulgari Eloquentia* 2: IV. 3. Dante, *Opere Minori*, p. 478. To indicate the compositional pattern of poetry Dante used the image of the fagot (*fascis*) that highlights the “tying together” (*aviere/ligare*) of rhythm, meter, and melody into a memorable verse. He followed the etymology provided by Uguccone da Pisa: “*Avieo. es idest ligo. as; et inde autor idest ligator*. Dante, *Opere Minori*, p. 460, n. 3. See *De Vulgari Eloquentia*. “*volentes igitur modum tradere quo ligari*” (p. 474); “*et demum, fustibus torquibusque paratis promissum fascem, hoc est cantionem, quo modo viere quis debeat instruemus*” (p. 488); “*Preparatis fustibus torquibusque ad fascem, nunc fasciandi tempus incumbit*” (p. 502). In his *De Lingua Latina*, Varro relates the verb *viere* (= *aviere*) to *vaies* (“the man who ties” = the poet).

keeps the process of signification open to the possibility of production, the divine source of infinite creation.

A question remains as to how the scriptive sign relates to the source of signification, a question that has been at the very core of metaphysics from its inception. Following the studies on grammar by Kamo no Mabuchi, Motoori found in the letters of the Japanese syllabary (*Gojū Onzu* 五十音図) repositories of sacred speech, the utterances of the gods.⁴¹ As Mabuchi had already argued in his *Reflections on the Meaning of Words* (*Goi Kō* 語意考), “the voice of the unseen” (*itsura no kowe* いづらの音), whose secret source—*itsura* means “somewhere although no one knows where”—only the gods knew, were nothing but “the voice of the fifty linkages” (*itsura no kowe* 五十聯の音), “the sacred voice that is subjected to no transformation,” “the voice of heaven and earth” (*tenchi no kowe* 天地の声).⁴² This led Motoori to categorize five kinds of “divine expressions” (*kami no kotoba* 神語) that he argued in the eleventh book of the *Kojikiden* to have actually existed.⁴³

Known as “the theory of sound/meaning” (*ongi setsu* 音義説), this interpretative model was rooted in commentaries of Buddhist scriptures, such as the *Hannyakyo Ongi* 般若經音義 and the *Hokekyo Ongi* 法華經音義. By applying this theory to the reading of the Japanese classics—*Kojiki*, *Nihongi*, and *Man'yōshū*—Nativist scholars believed that they could recover divine speech in either the sound of each syllable (*ichion ichigi ha* 一音一義派) or in each line (*ichigyō ichigi ha* 一行一義派) of the *kana* system. In this regard we see a common pattern developing among late Nativist scholars who shared the view that “nothing is outside language” (Suzuki Shigetane 鈴木重胤 1812-1863) and that, as the breath of heaven and earth, “*kotodama* was god (*kami*) dwelling in the spoken word” (Kawagita Tanrei 川北丹壺). The creational power of the fifty sounds was underlined by Tachibana Moribe 橘守部 (1741-1849), who argued that “the first sound of the syllabary, “a”, was the origin of the world (*aji hongen setsu* 阿字本元説). His debt to Buddhist philosophy is apparent when we consider that Moribe was resurrecting an ancient Buddhist doctrine developed in the Shingon school, according to which, the sound “a” was the alpha and omega of the world, the principle of the unperishable truth of emptiness (*aji honfushō* 阿字本不生). Other Nativists followed suit by finding the principle of truth in different letters of the syllabary. Fujitani Mitsue 富士谷御杖 (1768-1823), for example, believed that the key to the explanation of the world was in the letter “u” (*uji hongen setsu* 宇字本元説).⁴⁴

Motoori’s attention to scriptive signs was not limited to the reading of lexemes and

41 In the West the esoteric, mystic interpretation of divine language as manifested in the power of the alphabet and its combinations was a major goal of the Jewish Cabala since its inception during the Babylonian captivity (586-332 B.C.). Since language—both oral and written—was a gift of god to humanity, the twenty-two letters of the Jewish alphabet were listed among the elements of creation together with numbers. The word had the power to reveal the voice of the prophets, whose interpretation became the rabbi’s duty: the appearance of the word *‘alef* (= one thousand) six times in the scriptures, for example, will mean that the world is bound to last six thousand years. Sources for Cabalistic hermeneutics are *The Book of Creation* (*Sefēr Yōsrāh*, 7th-8th c. A. D.) and *The Book of Splendor* (*Sefēr ha-Zōhar*), which is attributed to the rabbi Simḏ’ōn ben Yōhā’ī (121 A.D.), although it is probably a work of the thirteenth century. Giorgio Raimondo Cardona, *Antropologia della Scrittura* (Turin: Loescher, 1981), pp. 204-205.

42 Quoted in Toyoda Kunio, *Nihonjin no Kotodama Shisō*, p. 188.

43 Toyoda Kunio, *Nihonjin no Kotodama Shisō*, p. 191. For further information on the role played by the Japanese syllabary in Motoori’s philosophy see the outstanding work of Koyasu Nobukuni, particularly his *Motoori Norinaga* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992) and *Norinaga Mondai to wa Nani ka* (Tokyo: Seidosha, 1995).

44 See Toyoda Kunio, *Nihonjin no Kotodama Shisō*, pp. 194-204.

morphemes—what is usually referred to by Japanese grammarians as “discourse on particles” (*teniwoha*). He repeatedly stressed the preeminent role played by the rhetorical dimension in the poetic reconstruction of divine language. On this topic, Motoori was quite indebted to what James J. Y. Liu has called a “metaphysical concept of literature”⁴⁵ as it was developed by Chinese thinkers. Although it might appear paradoxical to search for interpretative keys in what Motoori rejected as a misleading root of signification, the relevance for Japanese Nativists of the Chinese discourse on literature can hardly be underestimated.

We must think of the distinction achieved in China by the concept of analogy as a rhetorical figure in providing the major linkage between ontology and its metaphysical ground: the *wen* of men and the *wen* of the Sky (*tianwen-renwen* 天文人文).⁴⁶ The *locus classicus* of this analogical patterning is the passage in *The Book of Changes* that exhorts to “contemplate the patterns (*wen*) of heaven in order to observe the changes of season, as well as to contemplate the patterns (*wen*) of men in order to accomplish the cultural transformation of the world.”⁴⁷ The French sinologist François Jullien has called the relationship between the Dao and the immanence of *wen* “co-naturality” that the Sage must reestablish in order to understand the configurations of the cosmos.⁴⁸

In the eighth-century the Chinese poet Bo Juyi 白居易 had developed the concept of the three patterns—celestial, terrestrial, and human. He and his followers gave analogical readings of the *wen* of the Sky (sun, moon, and the stars), the *wen* of Earth (mountains, rivers, and trees), and the *wen* of Man (the content of his conscience as shaped by education). The reciprocity of Being, beings, and representation implied the notion of an omnipervasive Dao as origin (*yuan* 原) of a creative process whose mechanisms the professionals of the word reproduced in their acts of literary production. Liu Xie opened his famous *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (*Wenxin Diaolong*, 5th c. A.D.) with a quotation from *The Book of Changes* indicating “the power of Words to initiate the movement of the World.” This

45 James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 17.

46 François Jullien argues that in China, analogy takes the place held in the West by “imitation” (*mimesis*), the explanation of “art” on the ground of its imitation of nature. He gives the example of the analogic force contained in the image of the wind (*feng* 風) to define the power of words in classical Chinese poetics. In the commentaries of the *Book of Songs*, Confucian hermeneutics privileged the allegorical reading of the wind that stood for the indirectness of poetic expression in its penetrating mission of assisting the government in the process of “culturalization.” Rather than an object for imitation, nature was the carrier of influence that, once it scatters the leaves of words (*kotoba* 言葉), leads to the transformation and refinement of human nature. The Confucian notion of power—a diffused set of relationships whose order must be maintained more by moral example than by the power of the sword—found in the rhetorical usage of an insinuating wind an indirect way of voicing political criticism, as well as eliciting improvements from rulers and subjects alike. The analogy between the pattern of the “sky” and the pattern of the text was strengthened by the powerful wind of “a moral lyricism” (“lyrisme de la moralité”) that was one of the major poles of the Confucian discourse on culture, the other being the “lyricism of void” (“lyrisme de la vacuité”) inspired by Buddhist and Daoist aesthetics. See the following statements from the “Preface” to *The Book of Songs*: “The word ‘airs’ (*feng*) is used here to express the influence of instruction: the wind puts into movement and the instruction causes a transformation...The notion of ‘wind’ implies the fact that, like the wind, those above influence and transform those below. Like the wind, those below criticize those above. Through literary expression, complaints are governed by patterning (*wen*): there is no blame in those who criticize, and those who have ears for these critical remarks will know how to improve themselves. This is what the word ‘airs’ implies.” For the original text and an English translation of the “Preface” see Stephen Owen, *Readings in Chinese Literary Thought*, p. 38 and 46. François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, pp. 34, 97-102, and 113.

47 Adapted from James J. Y. Liu, *Chinese Theories of Literature*, pp. 25-26.

48 François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, p. 30.

resulted from the fact that “the words are the pattern (*wen*) of Dao.”⁴⁹

Since nature (*tiandao* 天道 or *daoti* 道体) was considered the root and the poet’s emotions the branches, the analogic pattern of poetry articulates itself through rhetorical devices playing on the coextension of what the West has hierarchized as *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*. Linkage, then, becomes the rhetorical keyword of Chinese and Japanese poetry, as we see from major techniques of expressionistic referentiality, such as the “analogic rapprochement” (*lian lei* 連類) and “metaphorical projections” (*tuo wu, jie wu yi yin huai* 託物借物意引懷).⁵⁰

How this reciprocity works in Motoori’s philosophical scheme is the subject of his theory of communication. Once he had established the perfect correspondence between sound and sign, Motoori could then proceed to explain how this divine pre-language allowed people to communicate in the world.

1.3 The Perfect Language

After dealing with the concepts of “voice” and “sign,” let’s now examine the role played by poetry in the formation of an intersubjectivity that allows communication with an outside. I have discussed the preeminence of the voice in Motoori’s philosophy of meaning. Now I must address the problem of how this voice gets communicated in a way that guarantees understanding among the receivers of the message. Western readers are probably most familiar with Western models of communication, first among them the phenomenological answer to the question how man can communicate the truth of his immediacy to an other that is located outside the original self. Edmund Husserl singled out the double connotation of the concept of “sign” (*Zeichen*): while the truth of reality is concealed in the sign as *expression* (*Ausdruck*), the process of communication takes place through indicative signs, signs as *indication* (*Anzeichen*).

The meaningful sign of expression existed in consciousness. Its exteriorization—ex-pression means “to bring out”—was left to the voice of language that transferred to others one’s own self-presence, the ownness of one’s own. In order to be meaningful, speech must be expressive: it must restore the immediacy of presence of a pure active intention—spirit, *psyche*, life, will—that is otherwise exiled in the approximation of indications, the surface of language that constrains truth to the strait jacket of the written sign. Speech restores the immediacy of living consciousness by asking the imagination (*Phantasie*) to reduce the interior monologue to the imagined (*vorgestellt*) words—not the real (*wirklich*) words of indication that must be bracketed off together with empirical worldly existence—of living experience. Speech escapes the *fictional* nature of the written sign since, as Jacques Derrida has argued in his critique of Husserl, “speech is *the* representation of itself.”⁵¹

Words are alive because they never give themselves completely out to others. Words never

49 Shih, Vincent Yu-chung, trans. and annot. [Liu Hsieh,] *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (Taipei: Chung Hwa Book Company, 1974), p. 12. See François Jullien on the topic of reciprocity and literary genealogy in China: “Une genèse globale de toute création littéraire est ainsi élaborée en fonction de ces trois termes fondamentaux: le Dao comme totalité cosmologico-morale, le Sage comme premier auteur (en même temps que l’auteur par excellence), le texte canonique comme premier texte (en même temps que le texte par excellence).” François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, p. 40.

50 The expressions “rapprochement analogique” and “projection métaphorique” are by François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, p. 166.

51 Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl’s Theory of Signs* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), p. 57.

leave the utterer and never cease to belong to him. The voice is heard by others as it is heard by oneself so that it never becomes a phenomenon “outside” consciousness: the voice communicates the transcendence of itself without the mediation of the body of/as signifier. Without giving itself out to the world and to space, the sound maintains the highest ideality, uncovering the self-presence of life/truth without stepping outside the ideal. Since speech is in no need of signifier in order to be present to itself, it will never know a moment of crisis which only occurs when a sign is involved in “producing,” “re-presenting,” “mimicking” external objects. The effacement of the distance between signifier and signified—the bracketing of space and time—is for Husserl a major condition for the “unproductive” and “reflective” voice to recapture the independence and originality of the spiritual process of life (*Geistigkeit/Lebendigkeit*). Derrida has brilliantly summarized Husserl’s phonological version of metaphysics as follows:

The voice is the being which is present to itself in the form of universality, as consciousness; the voice *is* consciousness. In colloquy, the propagation of signs does not *seem* to meet any obstacles because it brings together two *phenomenological* origins of pure auto-affection. To speak to someone is doubtless to hear oneself speak, to be heard by oneself; but, at the same time, if one is heard by another, to speak is to make him *repeat immediately* in himself the hearing-oneseff-speak in the very form in which I effectuated it. This immediate repetition is a reproduction of pure auto-affection without the help of anything external. This possibility of reproduction, whose structure is absolutely unique, *gives itself out* as the phenomenon of a mastery or limitless power over the signifier, since the signifier itself has the form of what is not external. Ideally, in the teleological essence of speech, it would then be possible for the signifier to be in absolute proximity to the signified aimed at an intuition and governing the meaning. The signifier would become perfectly diaphanous due to the absolute proximity to the signified. This proximity is broken when, instead of hearing myself speak, I see myself write or gesture.⁵²

The externalization—“ex-pression”—of self and voice is required if we want to achieve the “transport” necessary to communication. Although in a pre-Freudian society the locus of exit could hardly be defined as “consciousness,” its most likely counterpart—“the heart,” “the mind,” or in between—was entrusted with the same labor of movement. In 1763, the same year that Motoori was working on his *Isonokami no Sasamegoto*, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau was finding in the imagination the mediatory device that would bring communication about. As he stated in his essay *On the Origin of Languages*, pity—Husserl’s expressive sign—which is native to the human heart, must be activated by the imagination in order to be “expressed” outside the self. The knowledge of the other, then, presupposes the double movement of externalization and identification that Rousseau described as follows:

How are we moved to pity? By getting outside ourselves and identifying with a being who suffers. We suffer only as much as we believe him to suffer. It is not in

52 Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, p. 80. Of course Derrida is very critical of Husserl’s theory of signs, as well as of the entire metaphysical project, as we can see from the following remarks that Derrida appended to his essay: “The history of metaphysics therefore can be expressed as the unfolding of the structure or schema of an absolute will-to-hear-oneseff-speak. This history is closed when this infinite absolute appears to itself as its own death. A voice without difference, a voice without writing, is at once absolutely alive and absolutely dead.” *Ibidem*, p. 102.

ourselves, but in him that we suffer. It is clear that such transport supposes a great deal of acquired knowledge. How am I to imagine ills of which I have no idea? How would I suffer in seeing another suffer, if I know not why he is suffering, if I am ignorant of what he and I have in common. He who has never been reflective is incapable of being merciful or just or pitying. He is just as incapable of being malicious and vindictive. He who imagines nothing is aware only of himself; he is isolated in the midst of mankind.⁵³

This theory Motoori Norinaga called “the moving power of things” (*mono no aware*), the restoration of godly nature to those who allow themselves to be moved by the awesomeness of external reality. The potential for intersubjectivity—the very possibility of communication—was contained in the power of things (= words) to elicit the same emotions from different perceivers. Communication was made possible by the subjugation of difference on the part of a universal principle of sameness—“sacred speech” inscribed in “pattern signs.”

Motoori proceeded to the explanation of his theory of communication by concentrating on his etymological understanding of *aware* in a manner reminiscent of Martin Heidegger’s etymological labors. He lets language speak through the path of speculative etymologies in an attempt to capture the spring of signification.⁵⁴ He explained the expression *aware* as the result of the combination of two emotive particles—“*aa*”+“*hare*”=“*aware*”—indicating the initial surprise that the subject experiences before “the movement of the heart” (*kokoro no ugoku nari*) could properly respond to the challenges of the realm of feelings. Such challenges were conducive to the disclosure of Being (*kami*). Motoori considered *aware* the Japanese translation of the Chinese exclamation “Ah!” (Ch. *Wu hu*; Jpn. *Aa* 嗚呼),⁵⁵ an

53 John H. Moran and Alexander Gode, trans. *On the Origin of Language* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1966), p. 32.

54 For examples of Western speculative etymologies we might think of those medieval thinkers who found in the irretrievable language of Adam the ground of linguistic dissemination. Since language was a divine gift, Dante argued, the first word ever pronounced by a human being could only be “God”—“*El*” that, according to a medieval tradition, was the first and most important name of God in Hebrew. Basing his argument on what Dante called “the proof of reason,” (*ratio*)—to be distinguished from proofs based on *autoritas* (“authority”)—since man was created by God and for God, the idea that man might have named something different from his creator was simply preposterous. Since God was happiness (*gaudium*) and nothing but happiness lived in God, the beginning of speech was a happy event. However, following Adam’s original sin—man’s first utterance changed into a cry—“ah!” (Lat. *heu*)—to express the pain of transgression—“*Quid autem prius vox primi loquentis sonaverit, viro sane mentis in promptu esse non tibus ipsum fuisse quod “Deus” est, scilicet El, vel per modum interrogationis vel per modum responsionis. Absurdum atque rationi videtur orrificum ante Deum ab homine quicquam nominatum fuisse, cum ab ipso et in ipsum factus fuisset homo. Nam sicut post prevaricationem humani generis quilibet exordium sue locutionis incipit ab “heu”, rationabile est quod ante qui fuit inciperet a gaudio; et cum nullum gaudium sit extra Deum, sed totum in Deo, et ipse Deus totus sit gaudium, consequens est quod primus loquens primo et ante omnia dixisset “Deus”. De Vulgari Eloquentia I: IV. 4. Dante Alighieri, Opere Minori, p. 390. Dante brings the Latin semantics of human suffering (heu) back to the original Word of signification (El) in Hebrew. This, according to the Florentine poet, was the linguistic form (forma locutionis) spoken by Adam and inherited by the sons of Eber (=the Jewish people) before the linguistic dissemination that followed the erection of the “tower of confusion” in the city of Babel.*

55 In the eighteenth century the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico argued that languages derived from the voicing of interjections following the articulation of human passions. The awesome appearance of thunder in the sky that the ancients associated with the presence of god produced in man the voice of astonishment “pa!” In the opinion of the Neapolitan scholar, the doubling of this emotive particle, “pape!” became the root of god’s title “father (*pater*) of men and gods” (*Iupiter*). Vico explained this association by means of onomatopoeia, according to which, the sound of thunder produced the articulation of the Latin name “*Ious*”. The Greeks named “*Zeús*” after the whiz of thunder. The sound of the burning

expression of hidden-kept grief (*tansoku* 歎息) in need of linguistic articulation.⁵⁶

In order to trace the genealogy of the native poetic voice, Norinaga went back to what he considered the origin (*hajime*) of Yamato poetry: the vocal exchange between the deities Izanami and Izanagi prior to their copulation and production of the land. In *Isonokami no Sasamegoto* Norinaga quotes the following passage from the *Kojiki*:

“Then Izanagi no Mikoto said first: “Ah, what a cute maiden!” (*ana ni yashi, e wotome wo*). Afterwards, his spouse, little sister Izanami no Mikoto said: “Ah, what a handsome lad!” (*ana ni yashi, e wotoko wo*).⁵⁷

Motoori explained *ana* 阿那 as an exclamatory particle like *aya* 阿夜 and *aa* 阿阿 indicating the reciprocal surprise that the “young man” (*wotoko*)⁵⁸ and the “young woman” (*wotome*) feel at the discovery of sexual difference. The choral nature of the exchange—vocal expression (*tonafu* 唱ふ) followed by a reply (*kotafu* 和ふ)—underscores the presence of a major element that is required in all acts of communication: the need for an other to be present in order to be moved by a fictional character’s joy or pain leading to the experience of *mono no aware*. A sounding trace of the heart’s outburst, *aware* requires the presence of like-minded witnesses who share in the aesthetic experience and help the experiencing subject to unburden himself/herself of the power of feelings by becoming a new transmitting agent in

fire gave to god the name “*Ur*” in the Orient from which derived the Greek word “sky” (*ouranós*). “Ed esso Giove fu da’ latini, dal fragor del tuono, detto dapprima “*Ious*”; dal fischio del fulmine da’ greci fu detto *Zeús*; dal suono che dà il fuoco ove brucia, dagli orientali dovet’essere detto “*Ur*”, onde venne “*Urim*”, la potenza del fuoco; dalla quale stessa origine dovet’ a greci venir detto *ouranós*, il cielo, ed ai latini il verbo “*uro*”, “bruciare”. *Principi di Scienza Nuova* 2: 4. Giambattista Vico, *La Scienza Nuova e Altri Scritti*, p. 424. “Seguitarono a formarsi le voci umane con l’interiezioni, che sono voci articolate all’èmpito di passioni violente, che’n tutte le lingue sono monosillabe. Onde non è fuor del verisimile che, da’ primi fulmini incominciata a destarsi negli uomini la maraviglia, nascesse la prima interiezione da quella di Giove, formata con la voce “*pa!*” e che poi restò raddoppiata “*pape!*”, interiezione di maraviglia, onde poi nacque a Giove il titolo di “padre degli uomini e degli dèi”, e quindi appresso che tutti gli dèi se ne dicessero “padri”, e “madri” tutte le dèe; di che restaron ai latini le voci “*Iupiter*”, “*Diespiter*”, “*Marspiter*”, “*Iuno penitrix*”. Vico, *La Scienza Nuova e Altri Scritti*, pp. 424-425. For a discussion of Vico’s “naive fancy of a purely speculative ‘etymology’, totally unhampered by critical or historical scruples” see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms 1: Language*, p. 149. For Martin Heidegger’s etymological tours-de-force, see his *On The Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971; 1st German ed., 1959).

56 Motoori Norinaga, *Shibun Yōryō* 1. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 110-111. For a reading of this etymology, see Amagasaki Akira, *Kachō no Tsukai: Uta no Michi no Shigaku*, GBS 7 (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1983), pp. 222-241. In *Isonokami no Sasamegoto* Motoori denies the validity of the etymology that he had previously defended in a work entitled *Discussion on Aware* (*Aware Ben* 安波礼弁. 1758). Motoori’s first hermeneutical attempt was based on a passage from the *Kogo Shūi* reporting the happiness and awe that followed the sun’s reappearance in the sky—Amaterasu’s unconcealment from the cave as described in the *Kojiki* myth. According to this etymological theory the amazement (*aware* 阿波礼) of the gods at the view of the Sun-goddess was the result of the clearing of the sky (*amehare* 天晴) after a long period of total darkness. This interpretation was widespread during the Edo period: it appears, for example, in Kaibara Ekiken’s *Japanese Erymologies* (*Nihon Shakumyō* 日本釈名). In *Isonokami no Sasamegoto* Norinaga argues that the semantic field of *aware* goes well beyond the signification of a simple sigh of relief; it conveys the entire range of perceptions. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 285-286.

57 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 260. The original *Koiiki* text appears in Nishimiya Kazutami, ed. *Kojiki*, SNKS 27 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1979), p. 30.

58 In the commentary to the *Kojiki*—the *Kojikiden*—Motoori reminds his readers that up to the time of the compilation of the *Man’yōshū*, the word *otoko*, being the counterpart of *otome* (“a maiden”), only referred to “young men.” The extension of the word to indicate all men irrespective of their age points to a new and later development in the history of this expression. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 262, n. 2.

an uninterrupted chain of communication.⁵⁹

According to Motoori, the reading of *monogatari*, a genre whose distinction was sealed by its commitment to “recording human feelings as they are” (*ninjō no arinomama wo kakishirushite*), opens the door to a concealed world of feeling and perceiving, allowing the reader to recognize himself/herself in the characters, and thus reducing the psychological burdens of which the reader had originally thought to be the only victim. This ability to relate also functions as a yardstick to measure the degree of one's sensitivity and make sure of one's ability “to rejoice at a person's joy and to be sad in the presence of sadness.”⁶⁰ The insensitive person (*mono no aware wo shiranu hito*) is the one who does not cry when someone is in tears and is deaf to the “ah-invoking nature” of things.⁶¹ Communication entails participation in a set of relationships in which the speech of the unseen is recovered and distorted by the sign of poetic writing. Speech and sign rejoin the world of exteriority to the lost trace of an original Being whose presence is housed in the flow of language.⁶²

Motoori found keys to the interpretation of intersubjectivity and communication in the realm of perception in which he believed a perfect language was stored that did not require the presence of fracturing scripts. The language of *mono no aware* provided Motoori with a universal pattern of signification beyond the articulation of language into words and sentences. This was the goal of the linguistic research of Western medieval scholars as well, who were searching for the original language of the angels, the privileged creatures that were

59 Motoori developed his theory of *mono no aware* in *The Essentials of the Tale of Genji* (*Shibun Yōryō*, 1763). Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 131 and 236-237. As previously noted, Motoori was indebted to Chinese metaphysical theories of literature that used the image of the “wind” (*feng*) as a scriptive conductor of emotions. Although the wind cannot be seen directly, its presence is conveyed by the bending of grasses and leaves. Likewise, emotions are indirectly communicated (*tong* 通) by fictional situations that literature makes its duty to represent. The transfer of perceptions that culminate in the movement of the experiencing heart find its best analogy in the passage of wind. See François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, pp. 113-114.

60 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 84.

61 A poetics of “interemotivity” had been basic to the composition and interpretation of Chinese poetry since the first commentaries on *The Book of Songs* (*Shi jing*), culminating in the theories of Bo Juyi. According to such poetics, human nature (*xing* 性) is moved (*dong* 動) by external reality (*wu* 物) thanks to its sensitivity to emotions (*gan* 感). The *Wenxin Diaolong* describes this process as follows: “Man is endowed by nature with seven kinds of sentiments that are the results of an incitation (*xing* 興) produced by the external World. Moved by this external World, man sings what he feels in his interiority: nothing is there that is not natural.” This natural incitation puts in motion a relational process in which exteriority/objectivity and interiority/subjectivity move back and forth through a net of unending correspondences. See François Jullien, *La Valeur Allusive*, pp. 67-73.

62 According to the philosopher Sakabe Megumi, the metaphysical aspect recaptured by language in the experience of *mono no aware* is evidenced by Motoori's use of the expression *mono* rather than *koto*. Although both share in the same meaning, “thing,” Sakabe argues, the two words differ substantially as far as the thing implied is concerned. *Koto* catches the “thing” in what makes it different from other things, as the expression *kotonari* (事成り) = “to be a thing, to become a thing”/ 異なり = “to be different”) indicates. *Koto* stops at the level of the empirical object. On the other hand, *mono* implies the presence of “a person” (*mono* 者), and of “a possessing demon” (*mono no ke* 物の怪) that lends the word a more “vital” and “metaphysical” signification. *Mono no aware* then describes a set of relationships between the empirical object, the experiencing subject, and the metaphysical ground. Norinaga's theory— Sakabe continues—becomes the basis of “an aesthetics (*bigaku* 美学) and of an hyper-ethics (*chō-rinri* 超倫理) that transcends the level of the intramundane (*naisekaisei* 内世界性) properly known as human.” Sakabe Megumi, *Kagami no Naka no Nihongo: Sono Shikō no Shujusō*, CR 22 (Tokyo: Chikuma Shōbō, 1989), pp. 81-82. For a French translation see Megumi Sakabe, “Notes sur le Mot Japonais *hureru*”. *Revue d'Esthétique*, Nouvelle Série 11 (1986), p. 48.

believed to perfectly communicate their thoughts without a need for linguistic articulation.⁶³ According to Motoori, poetry and *monogatari* had the power to trigger a silent communication that brings expression back to its original locus, and reduces language to a device that must be discarded after the message has been “in-pressed” again in the readers’ fantasy.

Unlike the dangerous conceptualizations of logic that limit the possibility of communication to the stiffness of formal linguistic categories thus distorting the truth of all messages, the realm of feelings (aesthetics) recaptures the message’s presence to itself by going beyond verbal communication. Motoori argued that it was the purpose of poetry “to sing human feelings” so as to awake others to the meaning of human nature since the time when the “Great Preface” (*Daxu* 大序) to *The Books of Songs* was compiled in China (1st c. A.D.). Following on this point the lesson of Ogyū Sorai,⁶⁴ Motoori believed that later exegetical traditions misunderstood the language of poetry and took pride in misreading the “truth of self-presence” or “the human true passionate nature” (*hito no makoto no nasake* 人のまことの情) as the common language of craft, cunning, and action. The affectation of scholars eager to engage rhetoric in a game of self-interest—to convince others with logical arguments of poetry’s bearing over the moral issues of good and evil—and the pride they take in making shows of smartness (*sakashigenaru koto* 賢しげなること), have blinded readers to the poetic truth that the language of poetry does not rely (*monohakanaku* 物はかなく) on the consolation of specific purposiveness nor on the presence of a peculiar content (*adaadashi* あだあだしう). The spontaneity of perception that is best represented in the “language of women and children” (*onna warabe no kotomeki* 女童への言めき)—Motoori continues—resists the embellishing makeup (*tsukurohikazari* つくろひ飾り) of words’ deceptive surface (*itsuwareru uwabe* 偽れるうわべ).⁶⁵

Motoori metaphorically constructed this fight between logic and aesthetics by essentializing the other (China) to itself (Japan). He found reasons for the Chinese signifying practices in the realm of politics. China’s alleged babelic confusion followed the repetition of evil political practices that encouraged new dynasties to devise words of legitimation and forge a language of pretended virtue that only covered with the logic of education a reality of disloyalty and immorality. On the other hand, the Adamic language of the native soil sprang from the immediacy of the world of nature whose order the deities maintained by entrusting public matters to themselves and by delegating power to their imperial epiphanies.⁶⁶

Motoori argued that the recovery of perfect language takes place in the realm of native

63 See Umberto Eco, *La Ricerca della Lingua Perfetta nella Cultura Europea* (Bari: Laterza, 1993).

64 Ogyū Sorai writes in his *Distinguishing the Way* (*Bendō* 弁道): “The bad practices of Tsu Ssu, Mêng Tzu, and those after them consist in that, when they explained [the Way], they made it in the minutest detail [wishing thereby] to make the listeners easily comprehend [the truth]. This is the way of the disputants; they are those who want to sell their theories quickly...When we arrive at Mêng Tzu, we find that he proclaimed his clamorous message by means of casuistry and quibble; and he wished thereby to make people submit themselves. Now, a person who [attempts] to make people submit by words is certainly a person who is not [yet] able to make people submit themselves. For a teacher ministers to people who trust him.” Ogyū Sorai, *Distinguishing the Way [Bendō]*, trans. by Olof G. Lidin (Tokyo: Sophia University, 1970), pp. 78-80.

65 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 403-408.

66 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 408-409. Motoori developed further this point in *Rectifying Spirit* (*Naobi no Mitama* 直毘曇). See Yasuko Ichihara de Rénoche, “*Naobi no Mitama*,” *Il Giappone* 26: 1986 (1988), pp. 69-85.

poetry that freezes history by presenting the universal of “the age of the gods” (*kami no yo* 神世) in the particular of poetic form (*kokoro kotoba* 意詞). This was made possible by the alleged power of poetry to erase any mediation between expression (*kotoba*) and intention (*kokoro*) and to find in the language of the gods the immediacy and directness (*nahoku* 直く) of words and things. Unlike the discerning faculty of reason that mediates knowledge with an analytical apparatus, according to Motoori, the spontaneity and immediacy of the senses must be translated into poetic language. The “movement of the heart” or “feelings of love” (*jō* 情) are then recognized as a privileged *topos* of the native poetic voice, not to be confused with “the passion of desire and craving” (*yoku* 欲) that is still rooted in the intentionality of self-interest and as such cannot reach the depth of true feeling (*mono no aware*).⁶⁷

Motoori constructed the immediacy of feelings as “an original presence” (*moto no aru yō* 本のあるやう), “the essence of things” (*moto no tai* 本の体), which Motoori classified grammatically as “nouns” (*tai* 体). At the same time, the articulation of *mono no aware* produced effects in the realm of praxis that opened themselves to be appropriated for hermeneutical purposes. This effect Motoori called “the virtuous merit” (*kudoku* 功德) of poetry, the “pragmatics of presence” (*yō* 用) that worked in the pattern of communication in the same way that a verb (*yō* 用) functioned in a sentence.⁶⁸ As an example of the latter, Motoori quoted the remarks made in the preface to the *Kokinshū* in which poetry is seen to have the power to move heaven and earth, influence the realm of the unseen, and appease domestic relations. The translation of the articulation of *mono no aware* in the world of the seen was hermeneutically explained as the potential that the poetic word had in achieving concrete results that were otherwise inexplicable, such as, for example, the sudden fall of rain or the resuscitation of the dead (*kadoku setsuwa* 歌徳説話).⁶⁹

The concept of articulation, however, is a major crux of Motoori’s philosophy since immediacy cannot be retained if it needs the mediation of articulation in order to be communicated. How could a sign convey the truth of presence to itself? The straightforwardness of presence—Motoori argued—requires a communicational vessel that expresses the reality of the senses in the same way that those essences were perceived when they came into being during the age of the gods. As a result of the fact that both the senses and expression have changed since that age, the recovery of meaning must be conducted by getting as close as possible to the Adamic/Amaterasic language. Here is where rhetoric comes into play since it is the art of words that allows the poet to escape the distortions of contemporary language and to reconstruct the expressions of an otherwise irrecoverable past.

A paradox, however, becomes immediately apparent when we think that the recovery of the “truth of feeling” (*makoto no kokoro* 実の情) is entrusted to the working of a linguistic deception (*itsuwari* 偽り).⁷⁰ Motoori addressed this paradox by stating that the spontaneity of the present is far from meaning the presence to itself. Poetic truth (*makoto* 実) is not the expression of the poet’s instantaneous inner thoughts (*ima omofu koto wo arinomama ni yomu*

67 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 416-423.

68 Here I am following the explanation given by Hino Tatsuo who interprets *tai* and *yō* respectively as “essence” and “function.” Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 441, n. 11.

69 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 441-442.

70 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 458-460.

今思ふことをありのままによむ). It is the result of the poet's exposure to and mastery of "the correct, refined heart of the past" (*uruhashiku miyabiyakanaru inishihe no kokoro* うるはしく雅やかなる古への情). Motoori explained this deferral of immediacy by arguing that what at first might look like a forced attempt at appropriating the past eventually develops into a natural habit that enables the poet to present rather than re-present the perfect language of self-presence.⁷¹

Since this was recovered within poetic form, the exclusion of the present in terms of both language and experience from the act of poetic composition did not limit the validity of poetry as a heuristic act. Motoori shows that a poet cannot allow himself to "be inspired" by his own contemporary world and follow his "natural talents" on the ground that the immediacy of the past is the result of a skillful patterning (*takumi* 巧) that, unlike what other Nativists were proclaiming, was already present in the most ancient native songs.⁷² For Motoori immediacy meant the complication of expression, the inscription of the unseen into the pattern of the seen text. Far from conveying the immediacy of presence, an uncomplicated, clear expression was all that was needed to end up with a second rate poem (*ni no machi no koto* 二の町のこと).⁷³

The bypassing of the historical present in the recuperation of immediacy had for Motoori noteworthy consequences on the political level inasmuch as poetic language broke the pattern of historicity and its privileges. While the mastery over perfect language allowed an emperor to sympathize with his subjects and assume the persona of a farmer in his compositions,⁷⁴ the lower classes were made to experience the world above the clouds by bracketing the reality of the present in the immediacy of presence.⁷⁵ By so doing, however, history was recuperated again by having the creation of intersubjectivity—as well as of aesthetics—entrusted with the production of ideology.⁷⁶

1.4 Motoori's Hermeneutics

If the complex problem of Motoori's hermeneutics could be reduced to a simple formula, I would say that Motoori entrusted philology with the unveiling of an alleged "original meaning" whose density had been made impenetrable by the sedimentation of historicism. Motoori argued that the adding of historical, philosophical, and religious details to the process of interpretation obscures and distorts the poetic voice, leading interpreters to commit serious mistakes even in the field of their expertise, philology. We can see Motoori's insistence on the need to recover the root of signification in the painstaking arguments that he developed in order to explain the origin of the word "poem."

It was Motoori's opinion that the expression "Yamato poem" (*yamato uta* 夜麻登于多) indicating the local poetic production was the result of reading the characters for *waka* 倭歌

71 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 467.

72 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 468-469. Motoori already stressed the attention paid by the poets of the *Man'yō shū* to their craft in his *Ashiwake Obune*.

73 *Ibidem*, p. 471.

74 See, for example, Emperors Tenji and Kōkō, who impersonated a farmer respectively in *Gosenshū* 6: 302 and *Kokinshū* 1: 21.

75 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 480-483.

76 I have briefly hinted at this problem in the epilogue to my *Representations of Power: The Literary Politics of Medieval Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), p. 174.

in the Japanese pronunciation. The expression *waka*—Motoori continues—was either modelled on the Chinese practice of defining types of poetry according to the geographical area where the poem was produced, or, more generally speaking, it indicated a kind of poetry not to be confused with the Chinese poetic field (*morokoshi no kashi* 唐の歌詩). Motoori seems to prefer the latter explanation on the grounds of a traditional need to distinguish the local (*yamato* 和) from the alien (*kara* 漢). By focusing on the rare passages where the word *waka* appears in the *Man'yōshū*, Motoori warns his readers not to confuse the expression *waka* 倭歌 indicating “Japanese poem” with the homophonous word currently employed in Japan to indicate native poetry (*waka* 和歌). The latter originally referred to a poem written in response (*kotafuruuta* 答歌), what came to be known in later collections as “envoy” (*kaeshi* 返し). Far from meaning “a poem from the country of harmony,” this latter use of the word *waka* derived from the Chinese practice of replying to a poem (*shi* 詩) by using the same rhyming pattern employed in the original poem. This was known in China as *heyun* (Jpn. *wain*) 和韻 or “fitting rhyme.”⁷⁷

The association of “poetry” (*uta*) and “the Yamato land” (*Yamato*) in the expression “*yamatouta*” with which Ki no Tsurayuki opens his preface to the *Kokinshū*—“Japanese poetry has the human heart as seed...(*Yamatouta wa hito no kokoro wo tane to shite*)⁷⁸—was then a misreading of a word that simply meant “poem” (*waka* 倭歌) and nothing more. Motoori takes issue against medieval traditional interpretations of the word “poetry” that overread in it the history and mythology of the land. He was targeting works such as Sōgi’s 宗祇 (1421-1502) commentary to the *Kokinshū*, the *Kokin Waka Shū Ryōdo Kikigaki* 古今和歌集両度聞書, in which *yamatouta* was interpreted as “the poem that softens the heart of the Yamato people,” with reference to the harmonizing role played by the ancestral deities Izanagi and Izanami as symbolized in the union of sun and moon.⁷⁹ Motoori was also rejecting a theory introduced by the Shintō scholar Asai Shigetō 浅井重遠, according to which *yamatouta* indicated a form of poetry filled with the refinement of the capital as opposed to the vulgar verses made in the countryside (*hinaburi* 夷曲).⁸⁰

Motoori was extremely critical of other Japanese scholars who supported their explanations with what he considered alien theories that could hardly be applied to the native land. Not even the revered master Keichū was spared Motoori’s rebuke since Keichū had resorted to yin yang philosophy in his interpretation of the 5/7/5/7/7 pattern of *waka*. Giving credence to the yin yang doctrine, according to which odd numbers were considered symbols of the sun (*yang* 陽) while even numbers represented the moon (*yin* 陰), in the *Kokin Yozai Shō* Keichū argued that the three upper verses of a poem (*kami no ku*) and their 17 syllables were related to the sun. The two lower verses (*shimo no ku*) and their 14 syllables were instead to be read as symbols of the moon. The relation of the *kami no ku* to the sky explained the length and the power of the first three verses when compared to the shorter and less important final

77 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 347-350.

78 Okumura Tsuneya, ed. *Kokin Waka Shū*, SNKS 19 (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 1978), p. 11. For the English translation see Helen Craig McCullough, trans. *Kokin Wakashū: The First Imperial Anthology of Japanese Poetry* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), p. 3.

79 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 352, n. 1.

80 This theory appears in Tanigawa Kotosuga’s *Nihon Shoki Tsūshō*, Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 353, n. 3.

verses that were closer to earth.⁸¹

Keichū also supported the idea of the importance of relating each of the five verses to the Five Elements (*wuxing* 五行) of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth, as well as to the Five Constant Virtues (*wuchang* 五常) of humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness. This latter theory had many supporters during the mid-Edo period thanks to the efforts made by Neo-Confucian scholars, such as Yamazaki Ansai 山崎闇斎 (1618-1682), to interpret the native Shintō creed in the light of Confucian and other Chinese philosophies. Models of symbolic interpretations reached the public through very popular publications, such as *The Manyfold Fence of Waka* (*Waka Yaegaki* 和歌八重垣).⁸²

Motoori could easily ground his rejection of the Chinese dialectic of the symbolism of heaven in the “truth” of local mythology. Far from being a powerful male figure, the sun in the *Kojiki* was represented by a female deity, Amaterasu, while the moon was no other than the brave male deity Tsukiyomi no Mikoto.⁸³ Once again the fracture of meaning came to the rescue of an interpreter who resisted the idea of having the explanation of the “local” poetic production reduced to an “alien” epistemological system.

Motoori warned his readers against the temptation to inject gratuitous meaning in the process of interpretation. He levelled his criticism against ancient and modern critics alike, with a particular animosity toward those who practiced a contextual reading of poetry. According to Motoori, the contextualization of the poetic act that characterized the development of native literature from its inception by forging compositional “occasions” of poems and by freezing them in historical time, had robbed poetry of its “eternal” dimension.⁸⁴ For Motoori poetic language was the carrier of a privileged signification uncontaminated by the marks of contingency.

Motoori’s “aesthetic” reading of ancient poetry can be glimpsed in his interpretation of the famous song attributed to the deity Susanoo after his descent to the human world, his subjugation of the dragon, and his marriage to Kushihinadahime, the daughter of an earthly deity. Both *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* present the poem in the context of Susanoo’s settling down with his new bride in the newly constructed palace at Suga, in the province of Izumo. Standard translations of this poem all refer to the contextualized meaning of the mythical accounts. To mention the most quoted English translation, the poem goes:

Yakumo tatsu	The many-fenced palace of Izumo
Izumo yahegaki	Of the many clouds rising—
Tsumagomi ni	To dwell there with my spouse
Yahegaki tsukuru	Do I build a many-fenced palace:

81 Hisamatsu Sen’ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, p. 14. For an account of yin yang philosophy see Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), pp. 244-250.

82 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 483, n. 7.

83 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 485.

84 We might think of the role played by “prefaces” (*kotobagaki*) in poetic anthologies where the interpreter, who might well be the poet himself, explains to his readers the time, place, and occasion that led to the poet’s lyric need. On a larger scale, we might also think of the development of Japanese prose in the early tradition of *monogatari*, in which poems provided the occasion for the unfolding of fiction. Poem-tales (*uta-monogatari*), such as *The Tales of Ise* (*Ise Monogatari*) and *The Tales of Yamato* (*Yamato Monogatari*) are eloquent examples.

Sono yahegaki wo Ah, that many-fenced palace!⁸⁵

Although this translation is deeply indebted to the critical work of Motoori, something still remains that might have invited Motoori's blame. He would have probably accepted the rendering of the first word "yakumo" 八雲 as "many clouds." Following the explanation provided by Keichū in the *Kokin Yozai Shō*, Motoori noticed that this expression which literally means "eight clouds" does not refer to a precise numerical layer of clouds—it is not "eightfold" (*yahe* 八重)—but it more generally describes a numerous number of layers, as in the expressions "double cherry blossoms" (*yahezakura* 八重桜) and "double-petaled Japanese yellow rose" (*yaheyamabuki* 八重山吹).⁸⁶ Keichū was challenging a previous allegorical reading of the poem by the critic Kitamura Kigin 北村季吟 (1624-1705) who, in his *Commentary to the Eight Imperial Collections (Hachidaishū Shō* 八代集抄, 1682), had related what he interpreted as "clouds of eight different colors" (*yairo* 八色) to the place where lived the eight-tailed dragon (*yamata no orochi* 八岐大蛇) slain by Susanoo. The place was now the residence of the victorious god who was reminded of his achievements by the constant presence of these symbolic clouds.⁸⁷ Keichū was also disproving a medieval interpretation presented in the *Notes to the Preface to the Kokinshū (Kokin-jo Chū* 古今序註, ca. 1320), in which the expression "yakumo" was seen as a contraction of "yakigumo 焼雲" or "burning clouds" from the smoke rising from the dragon first slain and then burnt by Susanoo.⁸⁸

In order to lend further credence to Keichū's theory, Motoori reminds his readers of the etymological meaning of the word "eight" (*yatsu* 八). For this purpose he relied on Tanigawa Kotosuga's *Nihon Shoki Tsūshō*, according to which *yatsu* would derive from "iya 弥" meaning "many, numberless", and "tsu 津" meaning "ports."⁸⁹ The indeterminacy of the etymological root transforms the precise representation of contingency into the veiled expression of poetic truth. Susanoo's dwelling becomes then the metaphorical reading of metaphor itself that everything displaces without ever allowing the reader to enjoy the security of a temporal, geographical, "historical" interpretation. Many are the clouds that rise in a multilayered structure over the house of poetry. How can, then, poetry be made banal by reading in these "rising clouds" (*izumo* 出雲)—literally "the clouds that are coming out"—the name of a geographical area such as the "Izumo province" 出雲? It is on this issue that Motoori would have disagreed with the poem's standard translations.

Keichū had already criticized the contextualized reading of the poem made in the eighth century by the compilers/interpreters of the *Kojiki* and the *Nihongi*. He had noted that "since the name Izumo was given to the province after the time of the poem's composition, we cannot read the verse 'many clouds rising' (*yakumo tatsu* 八雲立つ) as a 'pillow word' (*makurakotoba*)—the rhetorical technique that has concrete names preceded by epithets—of 'Izumo'. "Keichū argued that "izumo" いづも is the contraction of "izuru kumo" 出づる雲 ("clouds that are coming out"). Therefore, rather than in the presence of a riddle, the reader

85 Donald L. Philippi, *Kojiki*, p. 91. For the original text see Nishimiya Kazutami, *Kojiki*, p. 57. The *Nihongi* has the variation "tsumagome ni"; the meaning, however, remains the same.

86 Motoori's text appears in his *Isonokami no Sasamegata*. Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 266.

87 Yamagishi Tokuei, *Hachidaishū Zenchū*, 1, p. 10.

88 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 266, n. 3. Keichū's text appears in Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, 8, p. 14.

89 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 267, n. 5.

was faced with a simple repetition—"many clouds" ("yakumo" 八雲), "clouds coming out" ("izumo" 出雲).⁹⁰

By fully supporting Keichū's theory, Motoori lays the ground for rejecting the making of the "numerous fences" (*iyahegaki* 弥重垣) into the historical walls of Susanoo's palace. The "fences" are simply "the many layers of rising clouds" ("izumo iyahegaki" 出雲弥重垣) hiding from view the *locus* of signification, poetry. In the present case poetry is female since, as Motoori says in his explanation, "the clouds build numerous fences by piling one upon the other in order to hide from view my woman" ("tsumagomi ni yahegaki tsukuru" 都麻碁微爾夜幣賀岐都久流).⁹¹ The novelty of Motoori's interpretation lies in seeing the "fences" as barriers made by clouds, which Motoori compares to "mist" (*kiri* 霧) in their power "to obstruct from view something when the viewer departs from it." These barriers are metaphorical walls that cut from sight the object of the viewer's admiration. They are not, as both Kitamura Kigin and Keichū had previously interpreted,⁹² real dwellings within which the viewer lives together with his beloved. Then, Motoori might have been less critical of the following translation that well fits his definition of the poem as a repetitive variation around the theme of clouds:

Yakumo tatsu	Many clouds rising,
Izumo yahegaki	Many layered clouds rising a manifold-fence
Tsumagomi ni	Hiding my bride from sight,
Yahegaki tsukuru	Clouds are forming a manifold fence,
Sono yahegaki wo	Oh, that manifold fence!

Rather than centralizing meaning in the concreteness of accessibility, Motoori hides the signifying power of poetry in the hermeneutical horizon of the veiled truth. The unwrapping of the image threatens the life of poetry if the interpreter eschews a mighty confrontation with the encroachments of history. Motoori's hermeneutics targets the removal of the sedimentation of earlier interpretations, embracing an idealistic aesthetic view, one which reminds me of the following words written sixty years ago by the Italian philosopher Benedetto Croce (1866-1952): "A veil of sadness seems to wrap Beauty, but it is not a veil, it is the face itself of Beauty."⁹³

2. FUJITANI MITSUE'S CRITIQUE OF MOTOORI NORINAGA

2.1 Transparency

In examining Motoori Norinaga's theory of signs the reader is repeatedly confronted with the concept of "spontaneity" (*jinen* 自然) that lends transparency to the hermeneutical act and

90 Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, 8, p. 14. Interestingly, W. G. Aston is very careful to avoid in his translation mentioning the geographical area of Izumo. His translation reads, "Many clouds arise./ On all sides a manifold fence./ to receive within it the spouses./ They form a manifold fence—/ Ah! that manifold fence!". He adds in a note: "The poem no doubt alludes to the meaning ["issuing clouds"] and also to the name of the province, but it seems probable that the primary signification of izumo here is that given in the translation." W. G. Aston, trans. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1972), pp. 53-54.

91 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 268.

92 Yamagishi Tokubei, *Hachidaishū Zenchū*, p. 10; Hisamatsu Sen'ichi, *Keichū Zenshū*, 8, pp. 14-15.

93 Benedetto Croce, *La Poesia: Introduzione alla Critica e Storia della Poesia e della Letteratura* (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1994; 1st ed., 1936), p. 23.

made Motoori believe in a straightforward recoverability of meaning. Faith in the linear path of the past leading to the voice of pristine truth was the justificatory ground for Motoori's philological enterprise that was expected to facilitate the development of a theory of communication: a heart trained to the moving depth of things could easily share his experience with like-minded readers whose hermeneutical skills allowed the recovery of voices from the past. The honesty (*makoto*) and straightforwardness of the way of the gods (*shintō*) resides in the hidden voice of language (*kakurimi*) whose disclosure is the interpreter's role. Such a belief was predicated on the fact that a similar straightforwardness could be found in the present, making of *makoto* a universal, unfolding category to whose disturbance by the history of alien hermeneutical strategies—mainly Buddhist and Confucian—the native poet and critic were finally asked to put an end.

The transparency of the metaphysical ground—the way of the gods—was posited as a requirement in Motoori's dialectic of recuperation that he consistently adopted in the reading of the Japanese classics, foremost among them *The Tale of Genji* (*Genji Monogatari*). Motoori's critical strategy aimed at differentiating two interpretative levels, one superficial and limited to the apparent signification of words—"the surface meaning" or *omote no gi* 表の義, the other profound, a concealment of the author's "real intentions" (*shitagokoro* 下心) behind the pattern of words—what Motoori called "the underside meaning" (*ura no gi* 裏の義). Motoori alleges to have found his own "surface/back theory of reading" (*hyōri no gi* 表裏の義) in the narrative structure employed by Murasaki Shikibu in her famous defense of *monogatari* in the "Fireflies" chapter of *The Tale of Genji*. While on the surface Murasaki entrusted Genji with a fierce attack against fiction, thus voicing the contemporary, male, and Buddhist reservations about the function of the literary act, on a deeper and more intentional level Murasaki conducted a strenuous defense of the genre by making Genji a carrier of her—and now Motoori's—double interpretative strategy. This, Motoori clearly stated in his critical work on *Genji*, *The Essentials of The Tale of Genji* (*Shibun Yōryō*, 1763):

In her tale Murasaki Shikibu expressed straightforwardly the real purpose (*hoi* 本意) for writing *The Tale of Genji* in the chapter entitled "Fireflies" ("Hotaru"). Although she does not spell it out in any definite way, she distinguishes herself from the authors of the usual, ancient stories by showing her hidden purpose (*shitagokoro*) in the dialogue between Genji and Tamakazura. Since in the ancient commentaries there are many mistakes, and it is hard to single out the author's purpose, not to mention numerous misinterpretations, I will extract the entire passage from the text, providing my commentary to each section. This shall become a guide through the text that will uncover Murasaki's hidden purpose to write the story.⁹⁴

A detailed analysis of words follows that delivers the promised uncovering of the author's "real intention", "unstated purpose", "hidden agenda"—in a word, Motoori's theory of communication (*mono no aware*). The unmediated access to the author's mind, however, becomes a problem immediately apparent to Motoori himself when, a few pages later, he must explain how the alleged *shitagokoro* works, where it finds legitimation, how it comes into being, what its relationship with the written sign is, and how it links the past (the way of the gods) with the present. The answer betrays Motoori's loss in circular thought in which a

94 Hino Tatsuo, ed., *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, p. 47.

series of tautological sentences fail to prove Motoori's thesis of the independence of aesthetic communication from pragmatic, didactic purposes. To quote Motoori's text:

Distinguishing two interpretative moments (*futashina* 二種) in *The Tale of Genji* Murasaki states her purpose in writing the tale. Earlier on she had indicated that the possible presence of truth in the genre shows the pathos of things (*aware*). This purpose aims at moving the heart for no explicable reason by having the scene somehow appealing to the reader's heart. As for how to make this purpose work, [the tale] must move the reader's heart and make him know the pathos of things. By knowing the pathos of things, the heart moves and [the experience] appeals to the heart. Therefore we should realize that there is no didactic purpose whatsoever in the writing of fiction.⁹⁵

The weaknesses of Motoori's theory were apparent to another Nativist, Fujitani Mitsue (1768-1823), who challenged Motoori's concepts of spontaneity, immediacy, and transparency.⁹⁶ He debated this point in several essays on language, such as *An Explanation of The Truth of True Words* (*Makoto Ben* 真言弁, 1802) and *Sobering to the Way of Poetry* (*Kadō Kaisei* 歌道解醒, 1805). How can man posit a moment of pristine bliss, Fujitani argued, when there are no textual proofs that such a time ever existed? He predicated the impossibility of recapturing the transparent immediacy of the past on the fact that mythological accounts disprove the argument of original purity. Fujitani reminds the reader of the evil circumstances that prompted the deity Susanoo-no-Mikoto to compose the poem "yakumo tatsu" or "the many-fenced palace of Izumo" that was traditionally taken to be the genealogical moment of poetic production in Japan. This song that Susanoo recited when he took possession of the land of Izumo, followed the deity's exile from the sky after his confrontation with the Sun-goddess Amaterasu. The alleged "purity of heart" taken by Nativists as a proof justifying the need "to return to the origins" was already lost from the very beginning, as the episode of Susanoo "breaking down the ridges between the rice paddies" and throwing his faeces "in the hall where the first fruits were tasted" attests. On this account, Fujitani continues, we should beware of Motoori's hermeneutics that single out "our land" (*waga kuni* わが⁸国) for its alleged "divine laws".⁹⁷

2.2 Time

How poetic language fulfills what Fujitani defined as the pattern of time is the topic of the present section in which I will examine the praxis with which Fujitani entrusted the language

95 Hino Tatsuo, *Motoori Norinaga Shū*, pp. 53-54.

96 Fujitani Mitsue has been quite neglected by scholars of Japanese literature. On the other hand, philosophers such as Sakabe Megumi have recently called attention to the important role played by Fujitani in his critique of Motoori's interpretative method. See Sakabe Megumi, "Kotodama: Fujitani Mitsue no Kotoba Ron Ichimen," in his *Kamen no Kaishakugaku* (Tokyo: Tokyo Daigaku Shuppankai, 1976), pp. 211-239. For an outstanding study of the silenced voices of the *Kokugaku* movement, including Fujitani Mitsue's, see the recent dissertation by Susan Lynn Burns, *Contesting Exegesis: Visions of the Subject and the Social in Tokugawa National Learning* (Ph. D. dissertation, The University of Chicago, 1994).

97 Fujitani's attack on earlier Nativists reminds of Derrida's famous criticism of Lévi-Strauss' "A Writing Lesson", Lévi-Strauss' reading of his own experiences among the Nambikwara. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 101-140. For an English translation of Susanoo's poem see Donald Philippi, trans. *Kojiki* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1968), p. 91. Fujitani's *Kadō Kaisei* appears in Miyake Kiyoshi, ed. *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1986), pp. 697-698.

of poetry. In an act of defiance against the setting up of aesthetics as the autonomous, independent realm of the arts, Fujitani resurrected the Neo-Confucian notion of ethics in his study of native poetics. The articulation of poetic language from the realm of human passions reinscribed poetry into the world of action thanks to the potential of poetry to penetrate the heart and correct the distortions of human nature.

According to Fujitani, far from being the repository of a mirroring transparency, the human heart was either the victim of violent passions—what he called “the passionate heart”⁹⁸ (*hitaburugokoro* 一向心), or the victim of dialectical thought—“the prejudiced heart” (*hitohegokoro* 偏心). The “prejudiced heart” is plagued by dual categorizations of reality such as “right and wrong, good and evil” (*jasei zen'aku* 邪正善悪). Excessive dependence on either one of the opposites is wrong because of the lack of a universal definition of reality that can be applied to all phenomena independently of the law of temporal change. Such a law Fujitani called “the proper time” (*jigi* 時宜), an elasticity to circumstance that might dictate apparently contradictory messages according to situational necessities. The “borderline of truth” (*makoto no sakai* 真のさかひ) is located within a space of adjustment that is dictated by the “propriety of time.” The “way of the gods” (*shintō* 神道) guides the human heart towards the goal of truth by training man to master the economy of time and space through the inducement of “right speech and action” (*mawaza* 真為). However, the constrictions imposed upon the trainee might well result in worsening “a prejudiced heart” into “a passionate one”, thus causing “the breaking of the pattern of proper time” (*jigi wo yaburi*).

The restorative act of transforming a “non-action” (*hiwaza* 非為) into a “true action” (*mawaza*)—the restoration and the “fulfillment of time” (*jigi wo mattōsuru* 時宜を全うする)—takes place within the “sacred wisdom-space” (*sei to ifu kiwa* 聖といふきは) of “the way of poetry” (*kadō* 歌道) rather than in the rational dictates of logic (*kotowari* 理). The aesthetic experience of witnessing in poetry “the form of a passionate heart that is going to break the pattern of proper time” (*toki wo yaburinamu to suru hitaburugokoro no katachi wo uta ni miru* 時をやぶるなむとする一向心のかたちを歌に見る) annihilates the power of personal gloom that diverts the attention from its proper path. Fujitani explained his privileging of poetry on the ground that in songs (*uta*) the reader finds a balanced combination of what Fujitani calls “the rule of the three restraints” (*mitsu no tsutsushimi* 三の慎): the restraint of logic (*kotowari* 理), aesthetic (*kokoro* 心), and action (*waza* 行). None of them has an absolute value but is subject to variations according to the pattern of proper timing. This elasticity to change comes to poetry from the fact that “words necessarily house spirit and spirit necessarily houses the mysterious articulation” (*kotoba kanarazu tama ari tama kanarazu myōyō ari* 言必靈あり靈必妙用あり). The excitement in the reader’s heart (*kandō* 感動) is the result of such articulation.⁹⁹

As an example of the perfect mastering of time, Fujitani quotes the mythical exchange that appears in the *Nihongi* between Ooanamuchi no Mikoto and Sukunahikona no Mikoto during the final touches of the creation of the land. The passage reads as follows in Aston’s translation:

98 There is in the word *hitaburu* (literally meaning “unidirectional”) a connotation of criminality which Fujitani provided in his explanation of the word. He quotes Murasaki’s association of *hitaburugokoro* with “criminals such as robbers and such” as it appears in *The Tale of Genji*.

99 This appears in the *Kadō Kaisei*. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 698.

Now Oho-na-mochi no Mikoto and Sukuna-bikona no Mikoto, with united strength and one heart, constructed the sub-celestial world. Then, for the sake of the visible race of man as well as for beasts, they determined the method of healing diseases. They also, in order to do away with the calamities of birds, beasts, and creeping things, established means for their prevention and control. The people enjoy the protection of these universally until the present day. Before this Oho-na-mochi no Mikoto spake to Sukuna-bikona no Mikoto, and said:—‘May we not say that the country which we have made is well made?’ Sukuna-bikona no Mikoto answered and said:—‘In some parts it is complete and in others it is incomplete.’ This conversation had doubtless a mysterious purport (*kono monogatari koto kedashi aran fukaki mune* 是談也蓋有幽深之致).¹⁰⁰

Fujitani explains the “mystery” of the exchange by noticing the improper behavior of the male deity (Ooanamuchi no Mikoto) whose resistance to continue with the “agony of labor” (*rō wazurashitamaheru tokoro* 勞煩したまへる所) and “desire for some idle rest” (*an’itsu naramahoshiku oboshimeshishi yue ni* 安逸ならまほしくおぼしめしし故に) makes him self-assured of the value of what he has already achieved and ready to believe that the work is now completed. The female deity (Sukunahikona no Mikoto), however, knows that a lot is still left to be done. The problem is how to correct “the prejudiced heart” of her mate, convincing him to continue with the production of the land. In order to do so, she must activate the mechanism of “the propriety of time” (*jigi*) that recognizes the presence of reality neither in “good” (*yoshi*) nor in “evil” (*ashi*), but “somewhere out there” (*kanata*). Should she agree with her husband and acknowledge that “things are indeed done” and “relax heart and body” (*shinshin ni yudan dekite* 心身に油断出来て), she might well please Ooanamuchi no Mikoto, but the process of creation would stop at the risk of losing what they had already created. Should she disagree with him and remind him that a lot was still left to be done, Ooanamuchi’s feelings might get hurt and he might abandon the woman, leaving the land incomplete. Sukunahikona decides to let her husband relax for a moment, knowing that “time shall certainly come when no harm will follow idleness.”

By neither denying nor validating his claim, Sukunahikona succeeds in “deeply moving (*fukaku kanjioboshimeshitarikerashi* ふかく感じおぼしめしたりけらし) Ooanamuchi no Mikoto to acknowledge the fact that things were indeed as she had indicated.” Thanks to Sukunahikona’s understanding of the “configuration of time” (*toki no shochi* 時の所置), the land was completed and could then finally be entrusted to the rule of gods’ descendants. Fujitani praises Sukunahikona as the perfect interpreter whose knowledge of “timing” deflects what could have been a cosmic tragedy. Her “deep affection” (*on utsukushimi* 御うつくしみ) for Ooanamuchi was the result of a “love tempered with fear” (*iai* 畏愛).¹⁰¹

A timed use of words, however, is ineffective unless the language is appropriate to the situation. In this regard Fujitani referred to the exchange between the primeval male and female deities (Izanagi and Izanami) at the time of the conception of the land—a proclamation (*kotoage*) that Fujitani considers to be “the beginning of poetry” (*eika no ranshō*

100 W. G. Aston, trans. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* (Tokyo: Tuttle, 1980; 1st ed., 1896), pp. 59-60.

101 This is discussed in the second chapter (“The Purpose of the Way of the Gods” or “*Shintō no Shishu*”) of *Makoto Ben’s* first roll. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 726-729.

詠歌の濫しよう). The female deity (*megami* 陰神) starts her speech—“Ah, what a handsome lad!” (*ana ureshi ya, umashi otoko ni ai*)—before giving her mate a chance to speak. This results in the repetition of the sexual ritual and the male deity’s (*ogami* 陽神) utterance—“Ah, what a cute maiden!”.

Fujitani argues that there is something deficient in the speech of both deities. Izanami’s mistake derives from her reliance on a passionate heart that is unable to contain its delight at the thought of the approaching intercourse. Her expression is marred by a speech delivered at the wrong time in the wrong mode, “an extremely private, personal (*watakushi* 私) outburst.” On the other hand, although her mate “does not break the pattern of time” in delivering his speech, Izanagi is faulted with repeating someone else’s tune, thus questioning the “sincerity” (*makoto* 真) of his own expression. The purpose of poetry (*ho-i* 本意) is neither private expression nor objective, untruthful representation: it is rather in the experience/action leading to the pacification of a heart that has lost all sense of propriety. The power of the deities’ exchange, therefore, is hidden outside the words of their utterances, and beyond both the subjective/internal (*ware* 我) and the objective/external (*kare* 彼) economies of speech.¹⁰²

Among the four kinds of speeches (*waza*) from which a poet can choose in writing his poem—the “neutral speech” (*karawaza* 空為) that brings no loss nor gain to the utterer, the “private speech” (*watakushiwaza* 私為) whose dependence on the self deprives it of all reliability, the “public speech” (*ōyakewaza* 公為) that binds the poet to rules and principles, depriving him of the power to move the reader, and the “true speech” (*mawaza* 真為) that penetrates the surface of reality and “brings out” (*uchiidetaru* うち出たる) the being of things thus moving deities and men—only the latter accomplishes the goal that is asked of poetry.

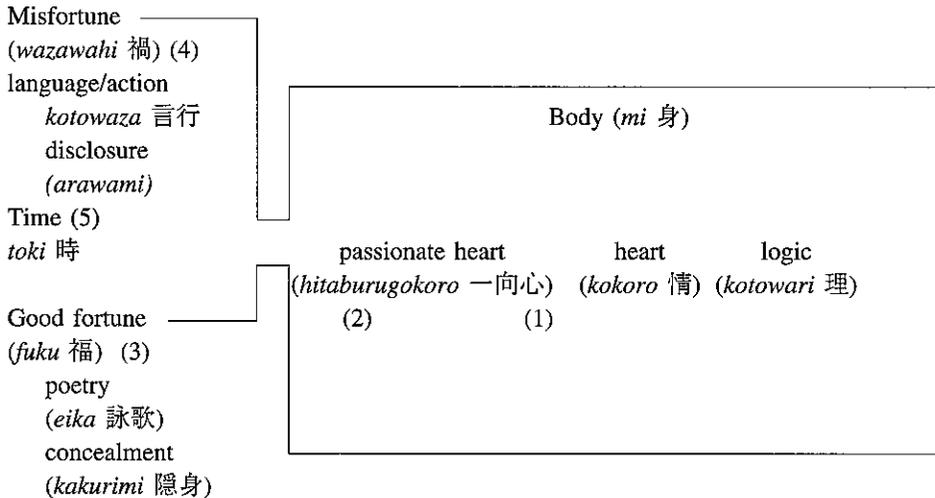
Fujitani’s definition of poetic truth (*makoto* 真言) requires the copresence of “a private heart and a public body” (*kokoro wa watakushi nite, karada wa ōyake nari* 心は私にて身は公なり *Ikōshin shishin* 公身私心) that curbs the poet’s tendency to make of personal desire the object of poetic expression. The respect of the public rule—worship of the deity, for example—in a moment of personal crisis might well move the heart of the god if the expression of worship is sincere. It is most effective particularly at the time when rather than being required, such an honorable expression of respect comes as the result of unselfish behavior. An unexpected (*fusoku* 不測) outcome follows the poet’s skill to restrain the “internal body of his heart” (*shinshin* 心身) and the “external body of time” (*jishin* 時身), as in the case of the lover of liquor who admonishes in his poetry the public danger of a private practice, or the bitter poet who in spite of his wretched heart knows how to deeply move the reader.¹⁰³

As Fujitani further points out in his *Light on The One Poem by a Hundred Poets* (*Hyakunin Isshu Tomoshibi* 百人一首燈, 1804), the suitability of the body to the proper pattern of time is what he calls “the concealment of the body” (*kakurimi* 隠身), a private practice of erasure that follows the veiling of “the passionate heart” and the disclosure of the

102 This appears in the first chapter (“The Purpose of the Way of Poetry” or “*Kadō no Shishu*”) of *Makoto Ben*’s first roll. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 711-712.

103 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 712-717.

“law of the gods” (*kami no nori* 神典).¹⁰⁴ Fujitani even provides a sketch of his thoughts that appears translated below:



(1): “Inside my body, logic constrains feelings.”

(2): “Being constrained by logic, my feelings cannot find solace.”

(3): “When I replace language and action with poetry, thus hiding myself, in the end good fortune shall come. Since time immemorial this is the form of poetry’s inspiration.”

(4): “When I entrust language and behavior to my feelings, failing to hide myself, in the end I shall drown in misfortune.”

(5): “As the presence of reality to itself, time occurs when I have a hard time expressing my feelings in words and action.”¹⁰⁵

Time as recuperated by poetry is the moment of the production of “difference” (*tagahe*), “the impact of a subject (*ware*) that imprints a difference on the configurations of reality [existing prior to the arrival of the subject] with an object (*kare*) that imposes changes upon the thinking process (*shoshi* 所思) of the subject.” Such an impact produces “a suspension of personal judgement (*waga shoshi ni matsurowanu koto* わが所思にまつろはぬこと)...that makes the other all mine while making myself the other.” The other to myself sees me as an other, in the same way that I see the other as other. The fluidity of the positions of subject and object makes Fujitani’s category of time the privileged space of understanding that human passions break and poetry rescues.¹⁰⁶

2.3 The Rhetoric of *Kotodama*

Fujitani shared with other members of the Nativist school the belief in the role played by

104 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 217-218. This idea explains Fujitani’s hermeneutical belief in the power of philology to uncover the “hidden self of the poet” (*utanushi no kakurimi* 歌ぬしの隠身). *Ibidem*, p. 222.

105 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 224.

106 The category of time is discussed in the section “Explanation of Time” (“*Toki no Ben*”) in the second roll of *Makoto Ben*. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 735-736.

human interiority in the articulation of the unseen through linguistic activity. Nativist scholars took issue with the positioning of rationality outside language and “the heart” of human beings in the abstraction of external “principles” to which human nature was asked to conform. The latter position was embraced by a Neo-Confucian orthodoxy—Chu Hsi’s interpretation of the Confucian classics—that in eighteenth century Japan became a common target of criticism on the part of Nativists and Confucianists alike.

As Fujitani saw it, “language was a guest in a process hosted by the spirit of things” (*kotodama wo shu to shi, koto wo kyaku to shite* 霊を主とし、言を客として),¹⁰⁷ the verbal articulation of the internal movement of the heart whose coordination was prompted by *kotodama*. In an Hegelian reading of Fujitani’s thought, the philosopher Tsuchida Kyōson 土田杏村 (1894-1934) has interpreted Fujitani’s concept of *kotodama* as a synthesis of a dialectic of affirmation and negation, presence and absence, that gives life to the process of thought, articulating thought into language before a further articulation into praxis takes place.¹⁰⁸

The power of poetry resides within “the spirit of words” (*kotodama* 言霊) to which Fujitani gives a grammatical turn by defining it “the mystery of inflection” (*katsuyō no myō* 活用の妙), the power of syntagmatic elements combined in the signification of the word. We must remember the nature of the Japanese language that supplements the Western categories of conjugation and declension with that of agglutination, the addition of particles to nouns and to the inflected stems of adjectives and verbs. The “mysterious working” (*myōyō* 妙用) of the living articulation of words—Fujitani reads the first character of the compound *katsuyō* 活用 as *ikite* 活て or “being alive”—is thus entrusted with bringing into being the border space between public body and private heart. A “perfect fitting” (*uchiafū* うちあふ) is required for the spontaneous arousal of *kotodama* as in the case of inebriation following the consumption of rice-wine (*sake* 酒) or the production of fire by flints. In Fujitani’s metaphorical readings, a correct dosage of rice and water can produce massive intoxication in spite of the relative safety of both ingredients. Likewise, the flint does not catch on fire although it might be the source of conflagrations. Events are, therefore, the result of the “in-betweenness” (*aida* 間) of things.¹⁰⁹

Kotodama establishes its presence by discriminating between two languages, “poetic language” (*eika* 詠歌) and “common language” (*gen-go* 言語). The latter is the site of the articulation of the duality subject/object (*kareware* 彼我), the privileged space for the reproduction of action (*waza*) by the “passionate heart”, and the locale for the breaking of the pattern of proper time. Although it shares with poetic language the same range of words (*kotoba wa hitotsu nagara* 詞はひとつながら)—which Fujitani defines “the vessel reflecting the human heart” (*kokoro wo utsusu utsuwa* 心をうつす器), common language has no preestablished form (*mukei* 無形) that might contain the presence of Being (*tama* 霊). A

107 Miyake Kiyoshi, ed. *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 1 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1993), p. 56.

108 Tsuchida Kyōson, *Kokubungaku no Tetsugakuteki Kenkyū* (Tokyo: Daiichi Shobō, 1927), pp. 82-88. For an introduction in English to the thought of Tsuchida Kyōson see Eugene Soviak, “Tsuchida Kyōson and the Sociology of the Masses”, J. Thomas Rimer, *Culture and Identity: Japanese Intellectuals During the Interwar Years* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 83-98.

109 Fujitani discusses “the power of words” in the section from *Makoto Ben* entitled “An Explanation of the Spirit of Words” (“*Kotodama no Ben*”). Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4. pp. 736-738.

victim of configurations of error that make everyday language a source of renewed danger—the voice of flattery, slander, etc.—common language lacks the rhetorical structure that houses the “spirit of language” in its own form (*yūkei* 有形).¹¹⁰ The voice of Being “kills the gloom that urges to action” (*waza wo unagasu utsujō wo koroshi* 為を促す鬱情を殺し), thus guaranteeing forever the efficacy of the poetic act: by “residing as a living entity inside the word”, *kotodama* assures the reader of all ages with deliverance from the dangers of action and passion.¹¹¹

Unlike reason, however, passion can be confronted, overcome and mastered because, according to Fujitani, the deity (*kami*) or interiority of man presides over the realm of the senses (*yoku* 欲), providing it with the potential for change and improvement. Reason (*ri* 理), on the other hand, is subjected to the exteriority of the self or man (*hito* 人); its limitation goes parallel with the limits of the human mind. The explanation of reality in descriptive terms relies on the direct language of man and of his limited mind. The metaphorical language of aesthetics, on the other hand, speaks the perfect language of the gods.¹¹² Then a difference must be posited between the two languages.

The presence or lack of straightforwardness in the perfect language is a major indicator of the localization of *kotodama*. Common language is straightforward communication and as such it is not privileged to voice the spirit of words. On the other hand, poetic language speaks by detours and rhetorical figures that require the poet to master the art of concealment. These ideas Fujitani developed in an essay entitled *The Essentials of the Way of Poetry* (*Kadō Kyōyō* 歌道挙要, 1817) in which he argued that the avoidance of direct expression led ancient poets to mask their feelings under the imagery of nature (*kachō fūgetsu* 花鳥風月). The power of words was believed to be of such a magnitude that any direct confrontation with the disclosure of meaning could be fatal. Fujitani based his argument on a passage from the *Nihongi* that extols the virtues and dangers of language at the time when the first “human” emperor, Jinmu, transmitted the knowledge of language from his heavenly ancestors to the earthly ancestor of a local clan, the Ōtomo house. The passage reads as follows in Aston’s translation:

On the day on which he first began the Heavenly institution, Michi no Omi no Mikoto, the ancestor of the Ohotomo House, accompanied by the Oho-kume Be, was enabled, by means of a secret device received from the Emperor, to use incantations (*fūka* 諷歌) and magic formulae (*tōgo* 倒語) so as to dissipate evil influences. The use of magic formulae had its origin from this.¹¹³

What Aston translated as “magic formulae” are literally “reversed expressions” (*sakashimagoto* 倒語), which, according to Fujitani, “are like saying ‘I do not go’ when I actually go, and ‘I do not see’ when I actually see. Reversals are applicable to events as well as to feelings. You do not reveal your thoughts; instead you build with words what you do not think. On purpose you invert the signification of words: This is the mysterious principle

110 By “form” (*kata* 形) Fujitani means the number of words and verses in set poetic patterns such as *chōka* and *tanka*.

111 The difference between the two kinds of language is discussed in the chapter “Difference Between language and Poetic Language” (*Gengo Eika no Betsu*) of *Makoto Ben. Miyake Kiyoshi, Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 738-742.

112 Fujitani develops this argument in *Light on the Record of Ancient Matters* (*Kojiki Tomoshibi* 古事記燈). Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 1, p. 67.

113 W. G. Aston, *Nihongi*, p. 133.

that makes people participate in your feelings.”¹¹⁴

Fujitani explains metaphorically the process of “reversed expression” with the example of the person who would rather receive spontaneously something that he deeply desires as a gift, rather than either stealing it or having to ask for it since the act of asking would already reveal the person’s greed. The secrecy of the poetic act must spontaneously elicit a response of participation from the reader, although this might invite the criticism that poetic expression is either untrue (*fujitsu* 不実) or unclear—“a puzzle” (*nazo* 謎). By using a straightforward language in expressing his feelings, the poet would fall into the trap of the private (*watakushi*), thus revealing the greediness of expression. The technique of dissimulation was well mastered by ancient poets who when leaving on a trip, would rather refer to “a robe which they had grown accustomed to over the years”, than directly stating their feeling for the beloved left behind.¹¹⁵

Fujitani distinguished between two kinds of “reversed words.” To use expressions devised by Western rhetoricians, we may call them metaphor (*hiyu* 比喩) and metonymy (*sorasu* そらす). Fujitani explains the former as the employment of scattered flowers to indicate the transience of life (*mujō* 無常), or the transferral of meaning from the image of the evergreen pine-tree to the concept of longevity (*kotobuki* 寿). The latter is a further deferral of meaning inasmuch as “it evades to the outside” (*soto he sorasu* 外へそらす) any direct confrontation with the object of representation. Fujitani mentions the effectiveness of an expression such as “I want to visit your house” on the part of a lover yearning for a meeting with his beloved, rather than the more direct, more prosaic, and less convincing, “I want to see you”.¹¹⁶

Direct expression (*jiki* 直) loses the power of supplementarity, the potential articulation of metaphorical and metonymic transferral that accommodates “what is left behind” (*amari* 余) by common language. Fujitani reminds his reader that “true language” (*makoto* 直言) is not “direct language” (*jiki ni koto wo tsukemu to su* 直に言をつけむとす), thus warning him against a literal reading of the word *makoto* as the “straightforward expression of one’s true feelings or of real circumstances.” The artless expression of the child does not recover “the deity perfectly housed in language” (*kotoba ni wa kotogotoku kami yadoritamahite* 詞にはことごとく神やどり給ひて). To entrust the heart to the direct expression of personal feelings fails to convey language’s potential for discourse that “the spirit of words” (*kotodama*) continuously renews.¹¹⁷

The act of poetic deferral is achieved through what Fujitani calls “an economy of language” (*kotosukuna* 言すくな) that conforms to the ancient belief in the evil consequences

114 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 766.

115 Fujitani argues that the metaphorical power of language was lost with the practice of writing poems on set topics (*daiei* 題詠) after the tight organization of the seasonal poems in the *Kokinshū*. The loss of the density of metaphorical signification led poets to sing nature (*kachō fūgetsu*) for the sake of singing. The surface meaning took center stage at the expense of the “implied” meaning. The formalization of the poetic activity kept poetry from assisting the ethical sphere that remained a major concern in Fujitani’s development of a theory of communication. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 766-777.

116 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 768. In *Kadō Kaisei* Fujitani argues that “the house is the face of the girl”, reiterating once again the need to sing “either what is next to the object of representation or what the object of representation is not.” *Ibidem*, p. 689.

117 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 768-769.

that may derive from the wrong use of words at the inappropriate time.¹¹⁸ Here Fujitani was deeply indebted to the linguistic research of his father, Nariakira 成章 (1738-1779), one of the first major Japanese grammarians. From Nariakira he borrowed the idea that language needs to be “dressed up” in order to be ready for its moment of disclosure. The distance created by rhetorical figures in the composition of poetry spares poetic language from the immediacy and the dangers of everyday language. Mitsue refers to what his father called “the three fabrics” (*sangu* 三具) of poetry: the “hairpin” (*kazashi* 挿頭) made of adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions, interjections, and fixed modifiers; the “dress” (*yosohi* 装) made of verbs, adjectival verbs, and adjectives; and the “strings” (*ayuhi* 脚結) made of particles, auxiliary verbs, and suffixes.¹¹⁹ Mitsue also added the techniques of “associated words” (*yose* 寄), by which he meant “prefaces” (*joshi* 序詞), and “shorter associated words” (*uchiyose* 打ち寄), such as “crown words” (*kanmuri kotoba* 冠詞), by which he meant “pillow words” (*makura kotoba* 枕詞).¹²⁰

Mitsue defined all these techniques the products of a gestural (*teburi* 手振り) past in which words were in no need of articulation (*kotoage senu kuni*) since reality was constantly made present to itself by the presence of gods.¹²¹ And yet, it is exactly against the idea of “self-presence” that Mitsue posited his theory of signification. As he stated in his *Sobering to the Way of Poetry*, studies on ancient lyric had been completed by scholars, such as the Tendai priest Senkaku (1203-1272) and, more recently, Keichū and Kamo no Mabuchi. However, in their research on the *Man'yōshū*, Fujitani argues, they had all attempted to recover a voice from the past without paying attention to the deflecting screen of language. Fujitani finds the cause of their innocent readings in the native skepticism toward the products of deflection—double readings, hidden signification (*kakuretaru koto* 隠れたる事), plays of metaphors and metonymies—that the local scholar associated with “the Chinese prejudice” (*Karabito no kokoro no kuse* から人の心のくせ).¹²² This might also explain the relative neglect of which Fujitani’s work has been a victim in the past one hundred years both in

118 This explains the use in the *Man'yōshū* of the expression, *kotoage senu*, “without making a proclamation, without disclosing the word”. See, for example, *Man'yōshū* 12: 2919.

119 Fujitani Nariakira explains these expressions in his *An Interpretation of Hairpins (Kazashi Shō)*. Takeoka Masao, ed. *Fujitani Nariakira Zenshū, Jō* (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1961), pp. 25-32.

120 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 772-773.

121 Fujitani refers to the following poem from the *Man'yōshū* (13: 3253) by Kakinomoto no Hitomaro: “The rice abounding land of Reed Plains/By following the will of the gods/Is a land that need no verbal articulation/And yet today I am going to lift up my word:/That good luck might come to you...” The original text appears in Kojima Noriyuki, Kinoshita Masatoshi, and Satake Akihiro, eds. *Man'yōshū*, 3, NKBZ 4 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1973), p. 390. A complete English translation of the poem appears in H. E. Plutschow, *Chaos and Cosmos: Ritual in Early and Medieval Japanese Literature* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), p. 90. For Fujitani’s quotation see Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 772.

122 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, p. 678. Fujitani reminds his readers that when the poet Ariwara no Narihira was singing maples, cherry blossoms, mountains, and birds, far from being interested in the particularity of the images, he was trying to express private feeling in the public context of his relationship with a future empress, the Empress of the Second Ward (Nijō no Kisaki). Greater attention to the *kotobagaki* preceding the poems, Fujitani argues, would help readers in their hermeneutical act. *Ibidem*, pp. 694-695. For a reading of *The Tales of Ise* along the lines indicated by Fujitani, although at the time I was unaware of Fujitani’s work, see my *The Aesthetics of Discontent: Politics and Reclusion in Medieval Japanese Literature* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1991), pp. 35-53.

Japan and in the West.¹²³

2.4 Meaning

According to Fujitani the examination of the internal movement of literary language eliminates the danger of applying to interpretation an external code, such as the privileging of the lachrymose elements making up expressive theories, or a concentration on the didactic aspect of literature on the footsteps of the exegetical tradition of the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing*), the most eloquent example of didactic readings. The latter had already been the target of Motoori's criticism which encouraged embracing a philosophy of feelings in order to provide texts with a certain autonomy. Fujitani's rejections of both sets of theories (*kyōkai* 教悔) stems from his belief in the relativity of the act of reading that produces in the text whatever the reader wants to find in it (*sono uta wo miru hito no kokoro nite* その歌を見る人の心にて). This explains Fujitani's location of "emotions" (*kandō* 感動) outside what he calls "the five rules of poetry" (*eika goten* 詠歌五典) listed below: 1) "the prejudiced heart" (*hitohegokoro* 偏心); 2) "the knowledge of time" (*chiji* 知時); 3) "the passionate heart" (*hitaburugokoro* 一向心); 4) "the singing of songs" (*eika* 詠歌); and 5) "time fulfillment" (*zenji* 全時). These five processes curb the power of emotions by rewriting them in the language of poetry.¹²⁴

This "specialized" (*sen'yō* 専用) language requires an interpretation of words that goes well beyond the simple "surface" (*omote* 表) of things. Fujitani argued that in order to get to the "truth" (*makoto* 真) of signification the reader must target what he called "the three levels of meaning: surface, underside, border" (*omote ura sakai* 表裏境). Each word is endowed with a multiplicity of meaning that the attentive reader must be alerted to uncover in order to avoid the trap of stopping at the mere appearance of the sign. Fujitani acknowledged that the pattern of signification may be much more complicated than a tri-layered structure. However, he states that he has chosen to limit himself to these three elements in deciphering meaning, given the difficulty of the subject matter—"something that goes beyond my knowledge" (*waga chi no oyobanu tokoro sahe* わが智のをよばぬ所さへ). According to this theory, the presence of "sadness" (surface meaning), for example, implies what is excluded from its trace, such as "the fact of not being sad" (underside meaning) as a *sine qua non* for the definition of the real meaning of "sadness," which is the tragic experience of poetic expression (the border meaning). The initial complaint voiced in the surface meaning—the poet's private moment—explodes in the voice of universal tragedy, the border meaning, once it has confronted the public reality governed by the mechanical principle (*kotowari*) of things—the underside meaning. At the stage of the border meaning the reader "meets with the

123 In a recent special issue of the authoritative *Interpretation and Appreciation of National Literature* (*Kokubungaku: Kaishaku to Kanshō* 57: 3, 1992) entirely dedicated to "Classical Scholars from Ancient to Early Modern Times" (*Koten Gakusha no Gunzō: Kodai kara Kinsei made*), the reader will be unable to find the name of Fujitani Mitsue, in spite of the fact that his collected works run eight volumes, each approximately 800 pages long. Konishi Jin'ichi, however, has recently mentioned Fujitani Mitsue together with Zeami and Bashō as the author of "theories that would have startled Western scholars like Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, John Crowe Ransom and other New Critics." Konishi Jin'ichi, "Japanese Literature in East Asia". *The Japan Foundation Newsletter* XXII: 1 (May 1994), p. 7.

124 The "five rules" are discussed in the section "Essay on Expressive and Didactic Theories" (*Kyōkai no Ron*) of *Makoto Ben*. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 742-744.

poet's spirit" (*sono nushi no tamashihi ni afu kokochi* そのぬしの靈にあふこち).¹²⁵

In *Kitabe's Poetic Treatise* (*Kitabe Zuinō* 北邊髓腦) Fujitani explains the "surface, underside, border theory" with the following example. In the case of the word "pine-tree", the immediate, most apparent meaning (1) refers to a plant that is different from other plants, such as, for example, the oak. The underside meaning (2) is the one which is excluded, the "oak" from which the pine-tree is differentiated. The border meaning (3) is the intended, symbolic signification that, in the context of the East Asian tradition relates the pine-tree to the notion of "longevity."¹²⁶

The contemporary aesthetician Amagasaki Akira (b.1947) clarifies the theory by applying it to sentences, in which case, following Fujitani's interpretation, the command "close the door!" would mean: 1) An order to close the door and not the window. 2) The fact that the door is open. 3) The fact that the person issuing the order might be concerned with the cold or the noise coming from the outside. The third meaning—the "border meaning"—is the most problematic since it is the result of fallible conjecture.¹²⁷

Fujitani applied this theory to the reading of Fujiwara Teika's *Hyakunin Isshu*. We see it in his *Light on The One Poem by a Hundred Poets*. The following is Fujitani's interpretation of a famous poem by Sugawara no Michizane (845-903):

Kono tabi wa	For this travel
Nusa mo toriaezu	I could not offer the deity
Tamukeyama	The paper offerings:
Momiji no nishiki	Instead I will be presenting him
Kami no manimani	With the brocade of maples.

Beside the literal meaning—the first level of interpretation and the most personal to the poet—Fujitani reminds the reader of the extraordinary circumstances in which the poem was composed. The reader can surmise it from the fact that, had the poet planned his travel, he would have had plenty of time for the preparation of the customary offerings. The poet's inner desire to provide the deity with proper donations was thwarted by the fact that the travel in question is Michizane's trip into exile that prevents him from discharging his duties—the second interpretative level, which is related to the public moment of signification. The "border meaning" is the poet's profound resentment against the government at the thought that he has been deprived of his only chance to assure himself with divine protection during the dangerous trip to Dazaifu in the Kyushu island.¹²⁸

The deity speaks through the "spirit" of Michizane's words (*kotodama*) and it is with such deity that the attentive reader is blessed with a meeting. The deity is housed within the form of language as well as within human action. When passion distracts from proper enunciation, the pattern of the sacred is broken and man becomes a victim of his own rage. The channeling of the excrescence of feelings in the patterned structure of poetry restores action to

125 This is described in the chapter entitled "An Explanation of Surface, Underside, Border" ("*Omote Ura Sakai no Ben*") of *Makoto Ben*. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 756-758.

126 Sasaki Nobutsuna, ed. *Nihon Kagaku Taikei*, 8 (Tokyo: Kazama Shobō, 1958), p. 99.

127 Amagasaki Akira, *Kachō no Tsukai: Uta no Michi no Shigaku* (Tokyo: Keisō Shobō, 1983), p. 257.

128 Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 249-250. For an interpretation of Fujitani's hermeneutical strategy see Amagasaki Akira, *Kachō no Tsukai*, pp. 260-261.

the “spirit of language,” transforming human behavior into the deed of a god. At that point man fulfills “the pattern of time” by assuring himself with control over his own destiny.¹²⁹

国学的解釈論：本居宣長と富士谷御杖の解釈学的方法

ミケーレ・マルラ

要旨：本論文は二人の主要な国学者、本居宣長（1730–1801）及び富士谷御杖（1768–1823）が和歌の概念を論ずる際に用いたいくつかの解釈学的法について分析を試みるものである。本居は日本語語源学という学問領域の発展に貢献しながら、言語の音声が超越的な記号として即時的な音として感受されるという透明性の哲学を明らかにした。本居はこの論題について、『あしわけをぶね』（1757）、『あはれ弁』（1758）、『紫文要領』（1763）、及び『石上私淑言』（1763）などの作品において論じている。一方、富士谷御杖は、『真言弁』（1802）、『百人一首燈』（1804）、『歌道解醒』（1805）、『歌道挙要』（1817）などの作品において、本居の自然、即時性、透明性といった観念に反発している。富士谷はさらに『北邊髓脳』の中で、本居の表裏の解釈モデルにもいどみ、意味の直接的回復性に関する本居の信条に挑戦した「境」という第三の解釈的可能性を加えている。

129 The relationship between passions (*kandō* 感動, *kantsū* 感通), language, and *korodama* is discussed in the last section of *Makoto Ben*, which is entitled “An Explanation of Feelings” (“*Kan no Ben*”). Here Fujitani provides an example of what he considers an ideal mastery over the self by the lady protagonist in an episode from the tenth-century *Tales of Yamato* (*Yamato Monogatari*, *dan* 149). This lady channels in her poetry the jealousy that is welling up in her heart after she has been abandoned by her husband who is now living with a wealthier woman. The lady hides so magnificently her feelings that the man, realizing the tragedy and the composure of his wife, eventually comes back to her, learning how to despise wealth when it is not paired with dignity and endurance. Had the woman unleashed her jealousy, thus breaking the pattern of proper timing, she would have lost her husband forever. By entrusting her deep feelings to the “spirit” of language, she has let language calm the woman’s rage, move the fickle husband, and restore their relationship. Miyake Kiyoshi, *Shinpen Fujitani Mitsue Zenshū*, 4, pp. 759-761. For an English translation of the episode from the *Yamato Monogatari* see Mildred M. Tahara, trans. *Tales of Yamato, A Tenth-Century Poem-Tale* (Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980), pp. 102-103.