

The Power of Illusion: Mishima Yukio and *Madame de Sade*

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The mystery and madness dwelling in the “normal” man and woman are the main problems of *Madame de Sade* by Mishima Yukio, one of the best modern dramas written in Japan. By accepting the ugly and the forbidden the writers—de Sade and Mishima as well—can reveal a profound truth and answer an unspoken human need.

In this article the author—introducing basic facts of new theatre development and Mishima’s new dramas—raises the theme of illusion as an important factor in the creative method of the work as well as in Mishima’s attitude to world. The heroine of *Madame de Sade*, Renée, taking illusion for reality, could not accept the real man—de Sade—on his return home from prison and had to reject him at the turning point of her life, until then devoted to her “scandalous” husband, the Marquis de Sade.

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INTRODUCTION

“The neon sign on the screen during the war and the actual neon sign on the Ginza street, I cannot distinguish which is illusion.

It might be our . . . my basic subject and my basic romantic idea of literature.

It is death memory . . . and the problem of ILLUSION”¹ said Mishima in April 1966 when he made an after-dinner speech in faulty English at the Foreign Correspondents’ Club in Tokyo.²

Which is illusion and which is actual reality in the world we live in? It is not

1 Capital letters are mine.

2 See: Henry Scott Stokes, *The Life and Death of Mishima Yukio*, Charles E. Tuttle, Tokyo (1985), p.16.

always obvious, because everyone—not only Mishima—is subject to illusion as part of normal perceptual experience. But in this case there is something more to it. Mishima, being extremely sensitive to the interrelation of illusion and reality—for instance of dreams and real life in the modern Noh drama *Kantan*—has created an exquisite form for the role of illusion in art and life in his play *Madame de Sade* (Sado Kōshaku Fujin, 1965, tr. 1967), written and played in 1965, five years before his death. At the time he was known in the world and appreciated mainly as a novelist, though his dramas and his theatrical activity had been important, too. Let us then first recall Mishima's achievements as a playwright of modern drama as opposed to traditional Noh and Kabuki.

THE EMERGENCE OF SHINGEKI, OR NEW DRAMA

Unlike the novel and cinema, the Japanese modern theatre has not stirred substantial interest outside that country. Western readers are familiar with such performing forms as Noh, Kabuki and Bunraku. The medieval classical theatre Noh has been sometimes used as a source of inspiration for theatre technique, while some means of theatrical expression derived from Kabuki find application in European productions. Displaying a peculiar attitude which is a mixture of nostalgia and fascination with the "typical Japanese" achievements, researchers and students of Japanese culture have been paying much attention and devoting many papers and books to the forms of the uniquely Japanese performing arts.

New drama, or shingeki, developed by making a complete break with native tradition, with the "god-infested premodern imagination"³ of Noh and Kabuki. It owes too much to the European theatre tradition to encourage a quest for the "Japanese genius" in it.⁴ In any case, shingeki emerged almost three or even more decades later than the modern novel, if the true modern theatre is to be seen in the Tsukiji Little Theatre (1924). After the Tokyo premiere of *Hamlet* by Shakespeare and *John Gabriel Borkman* or the *Doll's House* by Ibsen in 1910 and 1911,⁵ the new

3 See: David G. Goodman, *Japanese Drama and Culture in the 1960s. The Return of Gods*. An East Gate Book, M. E. Sharpe, Armonk, New York (1988), p.5.

4 Luckily enough in 1970s and 1980s were published several valuable books—translations and articles such as: J. Thomas Rimer, *Toward a Modern Japanese Theatre: Kishida Kunio* (Princeton: Princeton University Press: 1974); J. T. Rimer, *Mask and Sword: Two Plays for the Contemporary Japanese Theater* by Yamazaki Masakazu (Columbia University Press, New York: 1980); Ted T. Takaya, *Modern Japanese Drama: An Anthology* (Columbia University Press, New York: 1979); David G. Goodman, *After Apocalypse: Four Japanese Plays of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Columbia University Press, New York: 1986); D. G. Goodman, *Japanese Drama and Culture in the 1960s: The Return of Gods* (op. cit.); and Jürgen Berndt, *Japanische Dramen* (Volk und Welt, Berlin: 1986).

5 The Bungei Kyōkai (Literary Society) in 1910 presented public performances of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Tsubouchi Shōyō's translation, and the following year produced Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. But *John Gabriel Borkman* was produced by the Jiyūgekijō (Free Theatre) in 1911.

breed of actors, domestic plays and new literary tastes were still years ahead. Perhaps it took the longest to learn not only to seek entertainment and technical mastery in theatre but also to appreciate recreation in everyday life and social or intellectual games to produce a thoroughly realistic theatre in the spirit of Ibsen and, afterwards, of Chekhov. The Japanese theatre public preferred to see the colourful Kabuki shows and the sentimental family plays produced by the “new school” (shimpa), or updated Kabuki. This notwithstanding, the shingeki circles showed undaunted spirit and showed no signs of stagnation up to the 1950s. The rules of European theatre were studied with persistence, plays by nearly all fashionable authors as well as great masters were being staged by multitudinous groups and experimental companies—very often in spite of very limited audiences. By the end of the 1930s shingeki had been established as a realistic theatre with two main trends: socialist realism (Kubo Sakae) and psychological realism (Kishida Kunio).

The staging of Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* in 1945—with the best actors from four representative companies (Bungakuza, Haiyūza, Tokyo Geijutsu Gekijō and Shinkyō Gekidan)—marked the beginning of the rapid development of shingeki in the wake of official political suppression of “feudalistic and militaristic (samurai-like)” plays during first years of the Occupation of Japan.⁶ The emergence of new troupes, playwrights and directors—silenced during the war—was amazing. The repertoire of plays translated from foreign languages⁷ became rather rich. The playwrights and directors found themselves inspired by Konstantin S. Stanislavsky—on one hand—and Bertold Brecht—on the other, the two sacred figures no one dared to question until the “underground theatre” (angura-gekijō) as late as the last years of the 1960s. At that time the energy of the shingeki movement seemed to expire and artistic stagnation followed. Shingeki became an institution entangled in political disputes, because of close relations with the Japanese Communist Party and its sectionism. So for the younger generation some exponents of the “progressive” shingeki theatre were representative of a totalitarian political system descended from the official dogma of a “revolutionary theory” of art.⁸ So newly created theatre groups waged war against the shingeki tradition, starting a “post shingeki movement”—as David G. Goodman

6 See: *The Occupation of Japan: Arts and Culture*, The Proceedings of the Sixth Symposium sponsored by the MacArthur Memorial Old Dominion University, the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, October 18-19 1984, ed. by Thomas W. Burkman (Norfolk, MacArthur Memorial: 1988).

7 Besides some dramas by Shakespeare, Chekhov and Ibsen, there were staged (with mixed success) works by Arbutov, Aristophanes, Aeschylus, Durrenmatt, T. S. Eliot, Giraudoux, Goldoni, Maeterlinck, Molière, O'Neill, Osborne, Ostrovskij, Sartre, Saroyan, Shaw, Strindberg, Sophocles, Wild, Wilder and Williams.

8 The “Revolutionary theory of art”—the basic slogan of socialist realism, proclaimed in the Soviet Union in the 1930s—became a devastating force in the cultures of many countries, especially those dominated by communist governments. At the same time it became attractive to leftist movements in several democratic countries, including Japan. In Japan, probably in more subtle forms than in other political organizations, it dominated also the shingeki movement until the 1950s or even later.

rightly labelled it.⁹

In such circumstances, however, as early as the 1950s works by two young authors contributed new standards to the realistic shingeki theatre and immediately established them as the most outstanding new theatre playwrights. They were Abe Kōbō (1924-), who later on wrote the acclaimed *Woman in the Dunes* (*Suna no Onna*, 1962; tr. 1964, also made into movie), and Mishima Yukio (1925-1970), author of *The Confessions of a Mask* (*Kamen no Kokuhaku*, 1949, tr. 1958) and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* (*Kinkakuji*, 1956, tr. 1959).

Abe Kōbō offered a slightly shocking surrealist social satire in his *Doreigari* (1952, *Slave Hunt*), a play thematically close to the mainstream of shingeki's interest in proletarian protest, however very distant from it in its pursuit of new means of expression.

Mishima, in turn, made a brilliant show of his command of the language of the classics—both Western and native—and of his perception of the world in which the borderline between ethics and aesthetics became obliterated.¹⁰ In a way Mishima was quite close to “post-shingeki” thought in the sense that he, too, was trying to solve problems of the empty and meaningless life in a postwar Japan cut off from archetypal and aesthetic traditions (like shingeki). In the 1960s Mishima was obviously trying to identify his psychological (and political) needs with “atavistic fiction”¹¹—with the illusion of re-discovering the indispensable value of Japanese culture. Re-discovering the transcendental meaning of life and art ended for Mishima in an “atavistic and uncritical reinstatement of a fictitious, idealized past.”¹² This kind of illusion led the author of “Patriotism” (*Yūkoku*, 1960, tr. 1966) straight to madness and death—the possibilities for contemporary man, defined by Natsume Sōseki more than half a century ago.¹³

FROM THE HOUSE OF FIRE TO LEPROUS KING

Modern Noh drama. Mishima's modern theatre debut, *Kataku* (House of Fire, 1949),¹⁴ was soon followed by modern Noh plays with which Mishima scored

9 D. G. Goodman, *Japanese Drama. Op. cit.*, p.7.

10 See: John Nathan: *Mishima. A Biography* (Tuttle: 1975, 1983); Donald Keene, “Mishima Yukio,” in *Appreciations of Japanese Culture*, Kodansha International, 1971, pp.204-225; Edward Seidensticker, “Mishima Yukio,” and “Sea of Fertility,” in *This Country, Japan* (Kodansha International: 1984, pp.129-138 and 139-148).

11 I use here the expression suggested by D. G. Goodman, *op. cit.*, p.21.

12 D. G. Goodman, *op. cit.*, p.21.

13 Natsume Sōseki showed distinctly the disillusionment of modern man in *Sanshirō* (1908, tr. 1977), *Sorekara* (1909, tr. 1978), *Mon* (1910, tr. 1972), *Kōjin* (1913, tr. 1967) and *Kokoro* (1914, tr. 1957).

14 The play *Kataku* was published in the November 1948 issue of “Ningen” and staged by the Haiyūza Theatre at Tokyo Mainichi Hall (February 24–March 2 1949). However, the first published short plays are as follows: *Higashi no Hakasetachi* (Doctors from the East, 1939)

considerable success. Since Tanizaki Jun'ichirō no one proved as successful as Mishima in employing the classical forms to convey new ideas. Mishima used a method which was close to a paraphrastic rendering of an old theme. His first Noh play, entitled *Kantan* (1950),¹⁵ was based on a work by the 15th-century playwright Zeami. In the original play a traveller had a dream in the village of Kantan. He dreamt he rose to eminence and power as the emperor of China. Alas, the blissful dream, which seemed more real than the "reality" to the traveller, was wrecked by the host who invited him to supper. In Mishima's play the dreamer is a lazy good-for-nothing who is served breakfast by his former wet-nurse. The young man dreams of the wealth and power offered by money. *Kantan* and four other modern Noh plays were soon translated into English (1957) and staged in the USA and later on in other countries, including Poland.¹⁶ Even though he was very partial to the baroque and the grotesque, the plays he wrote for the Kabuki theatre¹⁷ were less successful. For that reason Mishima wrote mostly for the new theatre—beginning with the *House of Fire* and *Shiroari no Su* (The Termite Nest, 1955) through *Raiō no Terasu* (The Leprous King's Terrace, 1966)—and declared that he would write no more plays even though they constituted one of the "two magnetic poles" of his work.¹⁸

The Termite Nest. Mishima owed his early recognition as an outstanding playwright to the staging of *Shiroari no Su* (The Termite Nest, 1955),¹⁹ which depicted the empty and meaningless existence of Japanese emigrants, or rather refugees, of 1945—an aristocratic couple and a pair of servants—on a coffee farm in Brazil. The suffocating company at the ex-aristocratic Kariya's house gave rise to marital infidelity and suicide attempts.

The Deer Pavilion. After finishing *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion* in early 1956 Mishima hurriedly wrote the *Rokumeikan* (The Deer Pavilion, 1956),²⁰ which was staged with considerable success in the autumn of the same year. Critics admired the excellent command of language and the bold clash of historical realities—evoking

and *Ayame* (Iris, 1948). See: Mishima Yukio Zenshū (MYZ), 1981, Shinchōsha: vol. 20, pp. 47-70 (*Kataku*).

15 *Kantan*, see: MYZ 20, pp.299-338. First published in "Ningen," 1950. Other modern Noh plays were published as follows: *Aya no Tsuzumi* in "Chūō Kōron," 1951 (MYZ 20, pp. 339-366); *Sotoba Komachi* in "Gunzo," 1952 (MYZ 20, pp.381-401); *Aoi no Ue* in "Shinchō," 1954 (MYZ 21, pp.33-53); *Hanjo* in "Shinchō," 1955 (MYZ 21, pp.297-314); *Dōjōji* in "Shinchō," 1957 (MYZ 21, pp.579-602); *Yuya* in "Koe," 1959 (MYZ 22, pp.161-180); *Yoroboshi* in "Koe," 1960 (MYZ 22, pp.365-388).

16 *Five Modern Noh Plays*, tr. by Donald Keene. Knopf, New York: 1957.

17 For Kabuki theatre Mishima wrote *Jigokuhen* (1953, Kabukiza), *Iwashiri Koi no Hikiami* (1954), *Yuya* (1955), and *Fuyō no Tsuyu Ouchi Jikki* (1955). See: MYZ 21.

18 H. S. Stokes, *op. cit.*, p.183.

19 *Shiroari no Su*, see: MYZ 21, pp. 369-446, first published in "Bungei," 1964 and staged by Seinenza (part of Haiyūza), October 29-November 6, 1955.

20 *Rokumeikan*, a "tragedy in four acts," see: MYZ 21, pp.491-577, first published in "Bungakukai," 1956, and staged by Bungakuzo in Tokyo Daiichi Seimei Hall, November 25-December 17. The action of the play takes place on November 3, 1886, from noon to midnight, at Count Kageyama's residence (Acts 1-2) and in the Grand Dance Hall of the Rokumeikan (Acts 3-4).

nostalgic memories and stirring doubts—with the portraits of the main characters. The name Rokumeikan says a lot to the Japanese. It brings back the memory of the heroic modernization effort of the 1880s and at the same time makes some of them smile an ironical smile. Rokumeikan was the name of a hall built by the government to provide a venue for social meetings of foreigners and Japanese dignitaries. European-style full dress and crinolines imported from Vienna were a must for Japanese men and women attending the balls thrown at the hall. Why would they take such pains, one might ask. It was, in order to demonstrate that Japan, too, was a civilized nation and deserved to see the unfair mid-19th century treaties with foreign powers changed. A grand ball staged to celebrate the Emperor's Birthday (Tenchōsetsu, November 3) offers the setting for the play.

The bloodless cacti and the obsession with death. Historical encounters and moral conflicts—frequently seen only in the far background of Mishima's plays—are not only the framework for fictional events but also serve to bring forth and indirectly enrich the picture of the main characters as well as to saturate seemingly insignificant events with values derived from outside the text. What would have been the meaning of the lonely hours spent by the former finance minister Mori, the chief character of the *Tōka no Kiku* (Ten-Day Chrysanthemum, 1961),²¹ attending to his beloved cacti, if it had not been for meticulous historical setting of the play? An incident in the everyday life of the cacti—bloodless creatures—and in the meaningless existence of a man? But the perspective broadens when the former politician is visited by his faithful maid-servant, Okuyama Kiku. She saved his life sixteen years ago and has not seen him since. That dramatic attempt on his life of sixteen years ago is rendered as just an episode in the stream of events in the 1930s: one of many similar attempts on the lives of politicians, official and capitalists defending the social order and their own privileges. The terrorists were young army officers who set store only by the honour of being faithful servants of the Emperor and who were allegedly misled by generals and governmental ministers.

Mori confesses to the ex-servant that the attempt on his life by the young patriot was the most important event in his life. To be assassinated in the service of the nation and Emperor is the greatest honour for a politician, says Mori—especially when the politician's life is meaningless to people. One wonders what Mishima's message really is. Does he praise the chauvinist terrorists? Or does he attack the sentimental conservatism?

Mishima's sympathy for the assassins did not become apparent until much later on. Perhaps his sympathy for them did not stem from his political sentiments but from his obsession with death, evident in many other works he wrote. In the trilogy pivoting on the coup d'état of February 26, 1936, in the short story entitled "Yūko-

21. *Tōka no Kiku*, see: MYZ 22, pp.389-476, first published in "Bungakukai," 1961, staged by Bungakuza at Tokyo Daiichi Seimei Hall, November 29-December 17. The action takes place at the residence of Mori Shigeomi, ex-minister, and his family in the Shonan area, from the night of October 13 to the night of October 14, 1952.

ku" (Patriotism), and in the dramas *Ten-Day Chrysanthemum* and *Eirei no Koe* (Voices of Dead Heroes, 1966) the rumblings of History are barely audible but they do determine the fate of characters. However, that fate is the result of choices made by individuals who are in the focus of Mishima's interest. The author contemplates individuals, their passions, and their ability to solve the mystery of the choices they make, choices which frequently defy common logic, because they are spurred by illusions, expressed or unexpressed.

Political dispute. It is hard to say whether *Ten-Day Chrysanthemum* was seen as a political statement back in the 1960s. Anyway, the 'neutral' Bungakuza (Literature Theatre) offered no reservations about it. However, when Mishima approached the company with his *Yorokobi no Koto* (Harp of Love, 1964)²² the directors rejected it during rehearsals for political reasons. The company did not like the 'rightists' accents in some statements by the chief character. The play was not a great literary success and deserves to be remembered perhaps only because of its theme: the so-called Matsukawa Incident, the derailing of a train by an unidentified saboteur and the subsequent charges that it was done by leftists.

After the classicist play *Suzaku-ke no Metsubō* (The Fall of the House of Suzaku, 1967),²³ Mishima wrote a play under a somewhat provocative title: *Wagatomo Hitler* (My Friend, Hitler, 1969).²⁴ In this drama he showed the 'neutral' attitude of Hitler towards the events of the Night of the Long Knives in Germany in 1934. Mishima also refrained from any assessments of the dictator-to-be. Showing the Night of Long Knives as an incident in a power struggle, Mishima demonstrated his attitude to politicians, the shrewd, treacherous and brutal functionaries. The title refers to Roem, the Nazi leader who was among the night's victims. In the play Roem believes—here occurs a kind of political illusion—that Hitler is a friend of his until the moment it is too late to change anything.

The Leprous King. The last play Mishima wrote for the new theatre was his *Raiō no Terasu* (The Terrace of the Leprous King, 1969),²⁵ in which he used the story about the leprous Khmer king who built the Bayon Temple in Angkor Wat as a monument to himself. In the last scene, set on the staircase leading to the temple,

22 *Yorokobi no Koto*, see: MYZ 23, pp.23-115, first published in "Bungei," February 1964, and staged by Gekidan Shiki, May 7-30, 1964 at Tokyo Nissei Gekijo.

23 *Suzaku-ke no Metsubō*, see: MYZ 23, p.445, first published in "Bungei," October 1967, and staged by New Literature Theatre (NLT), October 13-29 1967 at Tokyo Kinokuniya Hall. It is an adaptation of Heracles/ Children of Heracles?) by Euripides.

24 *Wagatomo Hitler*, see: MYZ 23, pp.533-606, first published in "Bungakukai," December 1968, and staged by Gekidan Rōmangeki at Tokyo Kinokuniya Hall, January 18-31, 1969.

25 *Raiō no Terasu*, see: MYZ.24, pp.7-96, first published in "Umi," 1969, and staged by Gekidan Kumo and Roman Gekijo at Tokyo Teikoku Gekijo, July 4-30, 1969. (Mishima visited Cambodia in 1965, where in Angkor Wat he saw the monument of the "Leprous King" Jayavarmana VII (reigned 1181-1219): the Bayon Buddhist Temple with some 50 towers decorated with the monarch's half-smiling face. This experience Mishima connected with a story about Marquis Portland by A. Villiers de L'Isle Adam (1838-89).

Mishima attempted to justify the perverse thesis that the material proves victorious over the non-material, the body proves victorious over the spirit, very much in defiance of the common interpretation of the event: the king dies but Bayon remains as the monument to and expression of his spirit. Finally, we do not know who and what proves triumphant: is it spirit or matter?

MADAME DE SADE

The drama *Madame de Sade* (Sado Kōshaku Fujin, 1965, tr. 1967) Mishima based on a book by Shibusawa Tatsuhiko²⁶ entitled *Sado Kōshaku no Shōgai* (The Life of Marquis de Sade), as the subtitle of the play indicates. The setting of the drama is the highly sophisticated salon of Madame de Montreuil in Paris. The salon becomes the venue for three important social meetings: in the autumn of 1772 (Act One), in September of 1778 (Act Two) and in April 1790 (Act Three).²⁷

As we mentioned, Mishima cherished the richness of cultural tradition, Japanese as well as European. In this sense he was a neo-classicist. In *The Sound of the Waves* (Shiosai, 1954, tr. 1958) he used the Greek story of Daphnis and Chloe to portray modern idyllic love. Besides employing Noh and Kabuki patterns in his play writing he was an ardent student of Euripides and his psychology of tragedy, and of the French classics.²⁸

However, the credit for the play's success²⁹ in Japan did not go to its "neo-classicist" character. If anything, the Japanese audience would rather feel discouraged by the picture of a sophisticated salon, distant from its stylishly dressed women. One

26 Shibusawa Tatsuhiko (1928–1987), French scholar, writer, translator of de Sade and Cocteau, author of *Sado Kōshaku no Shōgai* (The Life of Marquis de Sade, 1964).

27 The original title of this play is *The Marquise de Sade*, but to avoid confusion (between marquis for Alphones de Sade and marquise for Renée) the translator Donald Keene decided to call it *Madame de Sade*. *Sado Kōshaku Fujin*, see: MYZ 23, pp.253–343, first published in "Bungei," 1965 and staged by Gekidan NLT at Tokyo Kinokuniya Hall, November 14–29, 1965. I saw this production and still remember it very clearly. The second important production was in 1966 at the Ministry of Education Art Festival, where it received the Art Festival Award in the Drama Division. See also: Gendai Nihon Gikyoku Taikei (1971, 1980), San'ichi Shobō, vol. 6, pp.391–425. The French version appeared in 1976 (Gallimard, "version française de Andre Pieyre de Mandiargues"). The Polish version was published by the monthly magazine "Literatura na Swiecie" (Literature in the World) in March 1989.

28 On French influences on Mishima, from Raymond Radiguet to Racine, see: D. Keene, *Appreciations*, *op. cit.*, pp.209–212.

29 After the premiere all the major newspapers published praises of the play. See for example: Etō Jun, "Settoku no aru serifu" (Persuasive Dialogue) in the "Asahi Shimbun Yūkan," October 29 1965; Yamamoto Kenkichi, "Kesshōdo no takai kessaku" (Highly Crystallized Masterpiece) in the "Yomiuri Shimbun Yūkan," October 30 1965; Isoda Kōichi: "Bitoku to akutokugeki" (A Drama of Virtue and Vice) in the "Tosho Shimbun," October 30 1965; Shibusawa Tatsuhiko, "Sado Kōshaku Fujin no makoto no kao" (The true face of the Marquise de Sade) in "Bungei," November 1965.

might say that these are not flesh-and-blood women but just rococo dresses cast in the roles of advocates of law and morals (Madame de Montreuil), religion (Madame de Simiane), bodily desires (Madame de Saint-Fond), womanly sincerity and absence of rules (Anna, the younger sister of Madame de Sade) and the people embodied in the maid costume (Charlotte). And what is the role of Madame de Sade in it? Is she just the central point of the circle respectively inhabited by other characters? It is very important to clarify her role in the drama. This question will be discussed later.

There was something in the very text of the play that stirred the imagination and interest of theatergoers. That was not just the taste of the splendid language, or the excesses committed by de Sade, not shown on stage. The secret of the high critical acclaim of the play in Japan as seen against other shingeki dramas was undoubtedly in the faultless composition of the work and first of all in the question it posed. People who flocked to see his play seemed to have been attracted also by the same question Mishima asked himself³⁰ after reading the book by Shibusawa, a fellow artist in the Bungakuza troupe at that time. Mishima was intrigued by the following mystery: why did the marchioness (in English translation: "madame") de Sade who had demonstrated almost absolute fidelity to her husband during the long years of his imprisonment decide to leave him once he was released? That mystery is the starting point of one's interest in the fate of this woman. And the attempt to find a logical solution to it is one of the binding agents of the incidents and issues in the drama.

In the salon's conversations opposing views as well as carefully disguised passions clash violently while the subjective feelings are subjected to the rigours of reason. At least that is how the surface stratum of the play's text presents itself to the reader.³¹

30 Mishima wrote as a postscript to the American edition of Donald Keene's translation of *Madame de Sade* that "Reading The Life of the Marquis de Sade by Tatsuhiro Shibusawa I was most intrigued as a writer, by the riddle of why the Marquise de Sade . . . should have left him [her husband] the moment that he was at last free . . . I was sure that something highly incomprehensible, yet highly truthful, about human nature lay behind this riddle . . ." Donatien Alphonse Francois, Comte de Sade (b. 1740, Paris; d. 1814, Charenton, near Paris) in 1763 married the daughter of a high-ranking bourgeois family, the Montreuil. By her he had two sons and one daughter. In the very first months of his marriage he began an affair with an actress, and then he invited prostitutes to his "little house" at Arcueil. For various sexual abuses he was imprisoned (in the fortress of Vincennes). After new public scandal he was sentenced to the fortress near Lyon for a second time. After his release and retirement to his chateau of La Coste he committed new sexual excesses, and fled to the estates of the King of Sardinia, where he was again arrested. After escaping from the fortress of Miolans, Sade rejoined his wife who from that time became his accomplice and shared his pleasures. After new incidents and scandals the Marquis was arrested in Paris, and sent to Vincennes in 1777, where he tried to incite the other prisoners to revolt. Visits from his wife were banned because of his fit of jealousy. After that the Marquise retired to a convent. In 1784 he was transferred to the Bastille in Paris, and at the beginning of the Revolution he was once more transferred to the insane asylum at Charenton, to be released shortly thereafter. His new role started as an activist of the revolution and writer. Separated from his wife, he lived with a young widowed actress while he wrote his novels *Justine, ou les malheurs de la vertu* and *Juliette*.

31 See also other articles on this play: Nomura Takashi, "Sado Kōshaku Fujin,"

Has the mystery been solved? Has Mishima finally found out what made Madame de Sade utter the words the servant Charlotte was supposed to relay to the husband—de Sade—waiting at the gate of her home after his long imprisonment:

Renée: Please ask him to leave. And tell him this: “The marquise will never see him again.”³²

But first the Marquise had asked the maid to tell her how the man waiting to be let in looked. Only then did she utter the final ruling which affected herself and the man.

In this way Madame de Sade (Renée) rejected reality—her own real husband, in his shabby state—and chose the fiction of illusion, the image of the man she had known long before, which she perceived as reality. She rejected the shadow of Alphonse de Sade waiting outside the door and decided to take along only a source of “the light”³³ she believed he was. So the imaginary de Sade—which Renée is going to take along to a nunnery—is more real and important to her than the old man outside her chambers. The latter seems to be the opposite of the de Sade she loved, therefore Renée cannot accept him if she is supposed to remain true to her own self.

There is one more angle to the mystery, however. Knowing Mishima’s obsession with beauty seen as an absolute value—though very often destructive, as in the novel about the acolyte Mizoguchi in *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*—we can also take into consideration an aesthetic motive at work and state that Renée could not possibly witness the return of the old and infirm Marquis to the glittering salon because his presence there would not only disturb the “reality” of absolute beauty nursed in her imagination for years, but also ruin totally the permanence of the ideal she decided to keep for ever.

“Among my incurable convictions is the belief that the old are eternally ugly, the young eternally beautiful,” wrote Mishima in 1966.³⁴ And Alphonse has become old.

Then what stands for reality and where does illusion begin? What does the Marquise de Sade choose? Illusion or Reality? In this particular intellectual game either answer solves the mystery and seems to be the right one.

in “Kokubungaku-zōkan” 5, 1970, pp.124-125; and “*Sado Kōshaku Fujin Igo*” (After The Marquise de Sade), in “Kaishaku to Kanshō” 12, 1972, pp.93-99; Sugai Yukio, “*Sado Kōshaku Fujin*,” in “Kaishaku to Kanshō” 3, 1974, pp.114-115; Betsuyaku Minoru, “Mishima gikyoku no hōhō ishiki” (The Consciousness of Method in Mishima’s Plays), in “Kaishaku to Kanshō” 3, 1974, pp.23-29.

32 Donald Keene’s translation, *op.cit.*, p.106. In the original we read: “Okaeshi shite okure. Sōshite, kō mōshiagete. ‘Kōshaku fujin wa mō kesshite omenikakaru koto wa arimasumi’ to.” (MYZ 23, p.342).

33 Renée, using the word “hikari” (light), says: “. . . Aku no naka kara hikari o tsumugidashite . . .” or “. . .Ano hito ga kono yo ni oyobosu sumireiro no hikari no naka de . . .” or “. . .kōzui no yō na hikari ga . . .” or “Ano hito [Alphonse] wa sono hikari no sei na no ka mo shiremasen” [sei = spirit, essence]. See: MYZ 23, p.340.

“Kōshi no soto de [. . .] ano hito wa nanto hikatte miemasu koto!” See: MYZ 23, p.339.

34 See: D. Keene, *Appreciations, op.cit.*, p.208.

However, Mishima offered a still more complex—and most interesting—perception of the problem. Renée discontinued her visits to the prison once the royal sentences were revoked by the Constituent Assembly³⁵—created after the Revolution—on the assumption that such visits no longer made sense and all that was left to do was to wait for her husband's return. However one can doubt that the hope that her husband would return some day was the logical reason why she stopped seeing him in prison nine months before his release. Evidence to the contrary was offered by her ultimate decision, as well as by her hesitation earlier on. For her husband, de Sade, was becoming ever more distant from “reality” even before the people around her could notice it. Thus Renée must have experienced a shock which strengthened her decision to discontinue the prison visits. Also, something must have made her consider Madame de Simiane's suggestion that she might go to a nunnery. The main reason underlying the change in Renée appeared to be *Justine*,³⁶ the novel Alphonse de Sade wrote in prison and gave Renée to read.

Renée used to identify herself with Alphonse.³⁷ However once she read the novel she saw herself as Justine,³⁸ the virtuous younger sister of Juliette, suffering the most horrible ups and downs in her life, very much unlike the elder sibling who banked on her viciousness. Influenced by the story of Justine's fate, Renée understood that her whole life had been in vain and that she had been experiencing tortures only for the Marquis to be able to write the horrible novel and imprison her in it.³⁹

Thanks to the novel Renée became convinced that de Sade had built an undestructible cathedral of vice, a code of evil, while his fascination with destruction of the rules changed into a creative force. Alphonse has piled blocks of evil one upon another to make his way to the top, a back staircase to heaven,⁴⁰ as seen by Renée, who finally decided to spend the rest of her life in the nunnery.

Being a believer in the power of the arts, Mishima makes no effort to hide the

35 As a matter of fact a few days before the collapse of the Bastille on July 14, 1789 Sade was transferred to Charenton, where he remained until April 2, 1790.

36 De Sade wrote his most famous work in 1787: *Les Infortunes de la vertu* (The Misfortunes of Virtue) and some short stories later published as *Les Crimes de l'amour* (Crimes of Passion). It is possible that he wrote the first sketches of *Justine* earlier and showed them to his wife. In any case, there are some clear inconsistencies between the official biography of the Marquis and Marquise de Sade and the version which Mishima used to write his drama. The novels *Justine*, or *The Misfortunes of Virtue* and *Juliette* he wrote in 1790 and completed in 1791, before becoming secretary of the Revolutionary Section in Paris and saving his father-in-law, Montreuil, during the Reign of Terror. He was arrested with copies of *Justine* and *Juliette* at his publisher's and was sent to Charenton once more and for good. It is deplorable that the very ambitious works he wrote in Charenton were burned by his elder son after his death.

37 Renée: “. . .Alphonse wa watakushi desu-tte” (MYZ 23, p.337).

Madame de Montreuil: “Sō da. Ima mo ariari to mimi ni nokotte iru. Omae wa sō oii datta. ‘Alphonse wa watakushi desu’ ” (MYZ 23, p.338).

38 Renée: “Justine wa watakushi desu-tte” (MYZ 23, p.338).

39 Renée: “. . .Watakushi o hitotsu no monogatari no naka e tojikomemashita”(MYZ 23, p.339).

40 Renée: “. . .Alphonse wa tengoku e no urakaidan o tsuketa no desu”(MYZ 23, p.339).

satisfaction he derives from entrusting to Renée the words which voice the triumph of the author of *Justine*: the world we live in has been created by the Marquis de Sade.⁴¹

And to a degree Mishima was right. For today we cannot ponder the relations between the sexes without taking into consideration or yielding to the tyranny of de Sade's thoughts on human nature and experience. Mishima chose a group of women connected with him to demonstrate how the "reality" of their lives becomes transformed under the influence of the thoughts and deeds of the absent Marquis. In such circumstances the individual behaviour and thoughts of de Sade became a mighty force, especially once they were transformed into a work of art in which Renée could see herself mirrored and which helped her to get an insight into the deepest secrets of her body and soul. The insight in turn helps her believe in the special mission of the author who crystalized evil and achieved its opposite, who turned wanton females into pious women and found his own catharsis in sensual pleasure and suffering.

At this point let me recall a paradox by the Buddhist thinker Shinran: "If a good man can be reborn in paradise, a bad one can be all the more so."⁴² This may happen through the grace of Buddha Amida. And that grace awakens natural gratitude in man's heart, which gives rise to the moral sense of the individual. The Marquise de Sade did perceive the possibility of change in her husband's behaviour as Simiane did when she spoke about the fair-haired boy reborn in all his purity and innocence⁴³ and the blood-stained night giving way to twilight. Also, she became increasingly convinced of the victory of morals over the amoral chaos of evil. Her line of thinking, however, is hardly naive. It was far more complex and took into consideration the role of the arts in the purification of man's flesh and spirit.

What was it then that Renée noticed in her own self, that made her retire to the nunnery? As she herself said, she noticed a light—which, though it came to her from the same source as to the pious Madame de Simiane, seemed to have reached her in a different way.⁴⁴ The holy light which in this case brings hope for the victory of morals does not come from the generally known source.

She learned about the direction it came from after she had read *Justine's* story. Consequently, she concluded that the mind which had created *Justine* was not that of a human being but one that belonged to a different world, a spiritual one, ruled by God. And perhaps that was why Renée decided to abandon her real world,

41 Renée: "...Sōshite, okāsama, watakushitachi ga sunde iru kono sekai wa Sado kōshaku ga tsukutta sekai na no de gozaimasu" (MYZ 23, p.339).

42 Shinran (1173-1262) wrote in the *Tannishō* as follows: "Zennin nao mote ōjō o tsgu. Iwanya akunin o ya." See: *The Tannishō: Notes Lamenting the Differences* (tr. 1962).

43 Simiane: "...Aa, nanto iu utsukushii kokoro. Ano kawairashii, kinpatsu no kodomo no, kiyoraka na sugata ga yomigaette" (MYZ 23, p.334).

Renée: "...Ano hito nanto hikatte miemasu koto! Kono yo de mottomo jiyū na hito" (MYZ 23, p.339).

44 Renée: "Sō desu wa. Moshi ka shitara onaji minamoto ka mo shiremasen. Demo, doko ka de hikari ga hanekaeri, betsu no hōgaku kara sashite kuru no ka mo" (MYZ 23, p.335).

Madame de Montreuil's salon, and the possibility of life with her own husband excluded from her world of ideas; she chooses instead to enter the other realm, inhabited by the idea of the Marquis de Sade, signifying the permanence of ideas in opposition to the fleeting life of her past, entangled with the affairs of de Sade as the man of her choice.

Renée decided to leave for a created realm bearing lasting, permanent traits. She went there, hoping for a life which in spite of all, derived its meaning from de Sade's case, too acutely tried by hypocrisy or simply the conventionality employed by society to guard its order.

Upon identifying herself with Justine, the Marquise de Sade also found her own way to goodness and salvation. By the same token the Mishima character (Renée) confirms the significance of art which explores the forbidden areas of human life and leads to the humanization of unusual but frequently the most genuine behaviour, inseparable from the deeply hidden truth about man. Only by seeing her reflection in a mirror created by the writer de Sade can the heroine find her own way to purification. Mishima's de Sade has become a bodhisattva, extinguishing all worldly desires and showing glistening light in a realm of eternity.

————— 幻想の力：三島由紀夫『サド侯爵夫人』 —————

————— ミコワイ・メラノヴィッチ —————

要旨：正常の男と女の心のなかに存在する神秘（不可解性）と狂気が三島由紀夫の『サド侯爵夫人』の主要問題であると私は考える。サド侯爵と三島という両作家は、人間の醜悪と禁断とされるものを受けとめ、深遠な真実を暴露し、人間の暗黙の要求に答えて表現したのである。

この小論の目的は新劇展開と関わる三島の主な現代劇を考察しながら、幻想という問題を、文学創造の重要な要因として考える。三島由紀夫の世界に対する態度にもまた幻想を追求することができる。戯曲『サド侯爵夫人』の主人公であるレネーという名前のサド侯爵夫人は幻想を現実とみなして、長年の監禁のあとで、刑務所から家に帰ろうとした現実の夫、すなわちサド侯爵を、引き受けず会いもせず、自分自身の生涯の転換期に夫を拒絶しなければならなくなった。その時点まで彼女はスキヤングラスな夫に対してずっとと献身的な態度を守り抜いていたのだが、夫がやっと自由になったとき修道院に自らを預けることにしてしまうのである。サド侯爵夫人の決心の理由は謎に包まれている。その謎を解こうとしたのが三島であった。いったい何がおこったのか。その疑問に対して解答を試みながら、芸術の本質を探ることになる。