

APPENDIX I

TRANSLATION OF "THE INTENTIONS OF THE NOVEL"

"The Intentions of the Novel" (Ômune),³⁹⁷ the essay wherein Motoori Norinaga sets forth the principal points of his theory of the novel, constitutes about two-thirds of the first chapter of Genji monogatari Tama no ogushi.³⁹⁸ The following translation of this essay is complete, except for the omission of a few short exegetical passages which would be rendered completely redundant by translation into English. All omissions are indicated by ellipsis points.

THE INTENTIONS OF THE NOVEL

Over the years there have been various interpretations of the intentions of this novel. All of them, however, neglect to take into account the basic nature of these books we call novels. They discuss the Genji only in the terms of Confucian and Buddhist writings, which is contrary to the author's intent. Although there are points of chance resemblance to Confucian and Buddhist writings, it will not do to single these out as characterizing the whole of the work. Its overall import differs sharply from works of that sort. As I mentioned briefly at the outset, novels possess a nature uniquely their own. And the Genji stands out among early novels as a work composed with more than ordinary seriousness; but more of this matter

later.

Now, the nature of the novel, as well as the reasons people read them, can be learnt from passages found in the various chapters of the Genji monogatari. Let me cite some of these and expound briefly upon their meaning.

In "Yomogiu" 蓬生 it says:³⁹⁹

It was to such amusements as frivolous old poems and novels⁴⁰⁰ that she turned to dispel the tedium and to reconcile herself to existence in this desolate and lonely dwelling.

The dwelling in question is the dilapidated and lonely house of the Princess Suetsumuhana. She takes comfort in reading novels because it consoles her to think that there are others in the world in just such precarious straits as her own.

In "Eawase" 絵合 it says:⁴⁰¹

Even someone seeing this travel journal without any knowledge of the circumstances would, if possessed of the slightest understanding, have been profoundly moved and found it difficult to stop his tears. How much more so

The "travel journal" is Genji's journal from the time of his sojourn at Suma 須磨. "Seeing it without any knowledge of the circumstances ..." means that even one with no knowledge of the events of the time would be moved; how much more so the person who knew and had experienced them.

In "Kochō" 蛸蝶 it says:⁴⁰²

In her reading of old novels she had been learning a great deal about what people and the world were like.

Since novels for the most part depict events of this world and the thoughts and deeds of human beings, in reading them one naturally gains a knowledge of life and comes to understand better the actions of men and the workings of their emotions. This is the main object of those who read novels.

In "Hotaru" 螢 it says:⁴⁰³

This year the rainy season had gone on without respite much longer than usual, and so they whiled away the dreary hours reading illustrated novels.

And again:⁴⁰⁴

The Tale of Komano,⁴⁰⁵ he thought, was exceptionally well illustrated. The picture of the little princess peacefully napping reminded the young lady of times past.

The "young lady" is the Lady Murasaki. "Times past" refers to Murasaki's childhood, which she here recalls.

In "Makibashira" 真木柱 it says:⁴⁰⁶

One knows from reading old novels that even the most loving parent, should his affections shift to another woman, may do the most foolish things. But this man

....

Here they learn of life and the world from reading novels.

In the second "Wakana" 若菜 chapter it says:⁴⁰⁷

On nights when he was not at home, she would stay up late and have her people read novels to her. The people

in these old novels, she noticed — even the most faithless men and the most amorous and fickle women — in the end always managed to settle down with some one person. How strange it was, she thought, that she herself continued to lead such an uncertain life.

These are Murasaki's feelings upon having novels read to her

....

In "Yūgiri" 夕霧 it says:⁴⁰⁸

In the old novels, even if some outsider should learn the secret, they are still able to hide it from their parents.

In "Hashihime" 橋姫 it says:⁴⁰⁹

He had always thought when he had heard the young women reading novels aloud that such things as they described could never actually exist; but now he realized there were indeed places where such beauties were hidden away.

In "Agemaki" 蛸角 it says:⁴¹⁰

Her own experiences, she thought, would serve as a warning for posterity as well as any of those tales of foolishness in the old novels.

And again:⁴¹¹

They realized how helpful this business of old words might be as a means of giving vent to one's feelings.

"Old words" here refers to poetry, but the same is true of novels.

In "Yadorigi" 宿木 it says:⁴¹²

Of situations such as that in which she now found herself she already knew a great deal both from novels and also from stories of real life. She had often wondered why people in such circumstances could not manage to behave more sensibly. But now nothing she had read or heard any longer in the least surprised her.

Here the younger daughter at Uji [Naka no Kimi 中納] undergoes experiences in her own life such as she had read about in the old novels, comes to understand them, and realizes that such things can indeed happen. The "situation" spoken of here is that of a woman whose lover is unfaithful.

And in the same chapter: ⁴¹³

An occasion as festive and gay as this is well worth seeing, which perhaps is why they are described so prominently in the old novels.

In "Kagerō" 蜻蛉 it says: ⁴¹⁴

She recalled that in the old novels there were examples of just such strange happenings as this.

And again: ⁴¹⁵

He imagined himself in that wonderfully drawn scene in Serikawa no taishō 芹川の太将 where Tōgimi とは君, ⁴¹⁶ on an autumn evening, yearning for the company of the First Princess, sets out for her home. If only his own lady were as compliant, he thought to himself with chagrin.

These are Kaoru's thoughts about the First Princess.

In "Tenarai" 手習 it says: ⁴¹⁷

"It all sounds like something out of an old novel," he said.

In "Yume no Ukihashi" 夢浮橋 it says: ⁴¹⁸

"I recalled reading in an old novel of someone unwittingly being laid out alive in the mortuary," he said, "and thought that just such a thing might have happened here."

This by and large is the attitude in which novels are read. The reader puts himself into a situation from the past, and enters into the emotions that moved the people of the past [mukashi no hito no mono no aware o mo omoiyari]. He likens his own circumstances to those of the past, and thus comes to understand these emotions [mono no aware o shiri]. In this way he finds some solace for his melancholy.

From the above examples we can see that the attitude of those who read the old novels — which is to say present-day readers of the Genji monogatari as well — is quite different from that of the readers of most Confucian and Buddhist works.

Now, in "Hotaru" Murasaki Shikibu makes quite clear her intentions in writing this novel. She does not, however, state them outright, but sets forth the intentions of her own novel in the form of a discussion of old novels between Genji and Tamakazura. But the commentaries contain many errors, and the author's underlying meaning is not immediately apparent. Therefore, as a guide to readers of the novel, I shall here quote the entire passage sentence by sentence, and explicate each so as to make clear its underlying meaning. The passage reads as follows: ⁴¹⁹

Her young ladies-in-waiting had collected a variety of fascinating stories of people's lives. Whether they were fact [makoto 真] or fiction [itsuwari 偽] she did not know, but none of them, she thought, was anything like her own.

These are Tamakazura's feelings as she reads the old novels.

The narrow escape of the princess in the Sumiyoshi monogatari 住吉物語 . . . called to her mind the fearsome Gen no Tayū 源太夫.⁴²⁰

She reads the Sumiyoshi monogatari and compares it with events in her own past.

His Highness noticed several of these books scattered about the room.

"His Highness" is Genji.

"Really now! You women seem to have been born only to be deceived by people, and without your even raising a complaint."

From this sentence forward Genji is speaking to Tamakazura.

These trifling novels, so full of lies, are a nuisance, he says; but women, far from regarding them a nuisance, are quite fond of them. Indeed, they seem to have been born for the very purpose of being deceived. At first he jokes with her, belittling the old novels.

Now, from here on the author's underlying intent is to take the viewpoint of someone who might read the Genji monogatari. At first, she criticizes, as in the belittling manner of this passage; she then goes on, now praising, now belittling, and eventually concludes that it would be hard to do without novels.

"You realize, of course, there is probably very little truth in any of these," he said with a smile, "and yet here you are, captivated and deceived by this nonsense [suzurogoto 漫ろ事], copying away quite unaware that it is a stifling hot day and that your hair is all in a tangle."

From the fact that he smiles we know that these words are spoken partly in jest. From "and yet" forward the sense changes. The underlying meaning here is derogatory: the Genji monogatari is but a trifling tissue of lies and anyone who would be so taken in as to read it is wasting his time.

"But without these old stories," he continued, "how indeed would you wile away the tedium."

His initial belittlement was meant in jest; indeed, he says, if it were not for the old novels, there would be no way to wile away the tedium. With the word "indeed" he takes the part of those who enjoy the novels. The underlying intent here is to answer the previous criticism.

"Amongst these fictions are some that show us people's feelings in so real a manner as to make us feel that this is life as it really is. One thing follows another so plausibly that, though we know it all to be sheer nonsense, yet, for no good reason, we are deeply moved. And so we may see some lovely little princess stricken with grief, and find that we ourselves are quite caught up in her woes."

Novels, Genji says, are by and large fabrication; but in them one finds what seems to be life as it really is. Though we realize

this is all a fabrication, yet we find it affecting, and our hearts are moved. "For no good reason" refers to the futility of being moved by reading a piece of fiction. The Preface to the Kokinshū speaks of this same thing with regard to a woman in a painting.⁴²¹ The "lovely princess" is one seen in an illustration in an old novel.

Now, the underlying meaning is as follows: The passage "It shows us people's emotions in so real a manner as to make us feel that this is life as it really is" describes the very essence of the Genji monogatari. This novel was written with the intent of making known to us in just this way the workings of the emotions [mono no aware o shirashimuru koto]. I will speak of this in greater detail further on. From these words we realize that the notion that this novel was written to "encourage good and chastise evil," and particularly as an admonition against licentiousness, is mistaken. Reading a novel may indeed stir our emotions, but how can it serve as an admonition against licentiousness? I shall speak of this in greater detail later.

"And again there are those that so dazzle us with their grandiloquence that we are taken in by things we know could never happen. Upon a calmer hearing we would only be annoyed, but at first we are fascinated."

This describes yet another aspect of the old novels. On the one hand, we have "life as it really is," reading about which moves us; while here we have the absurd of which we read only in wonderment. We are dazzled, she goes on to say, and at first we are fascinated. "See" and "hear" in this passage amount to the same thing; we either

read to ourselves or are read to by another. Generally, when something is just too outlandish or incredible, we are annoyed when we look back upon it calmly. Still, such things do have a certain fascination.

The underlying intent here is to say that the events depicted in the Genji monogatari are of two sorts. One is that described above — "life as it really is" — which moves the reader's heart and reveals to him the workings of the emotions [mono no aware o shirasetari]. For "one's heart to be moved" is to react to the emotional quality of a thing or situation [mono no aware ni kanzuru]. The second sort is the outlandish event. The former, of course, is the principal purpose of the novel. The latter sort is used occasionally merely to arouse interest. So in saying "upon a calmer hearing we would only be annoyed" she is in effect saying that in this novel such absurd and astonishing events are extremely rare, whereas those that show us the workings of the emotions [mono no aware o misetaru suji] are numerous. Those who prefer books depicting the strange and unusual, and find uninteresting those books which calmly demonstrate the workings of the emotions [mono no aware o misetaru], are insensitive dolts.

"Lately when I have stopped to listen to our young lady's women reading to her,"

Illustrated novels were considered a frivolous amusement for young girls — nothing that a man would take time to read. And so the author speaks here of his stopping to listen to the women read. In reality, however, such was not entirely the case. Men, too,

commonly read novels — so avidly, in fact, that they would even cite old novels on points of precedent. We see examples of this here and there, even in this novel. This is a bit of self-deprecation on the author's part.

"I have been struck with what extraordinary tellers of tales we have these days. Such stuff could only come from someone well accustomed to lying [soragoto 空事] it seems to me; but perhaps I am wrong."

The person who can write of something which we know does not exist and yet make us feel that it is real, so that we are moved; or write of something we know never could have happened and yet arouse in us an interest in it — this person, Genji says, must be one accustomed to lying and skilled in it. But is this in fact so? he goes on to ask. "But perhaps I am wrong" means that although one might think so, such perhaps is not the case. The author is here discreetly chiding the reader. The question posed here is answered in the following passage.

"Isn't it rather a person who is himself accustomed to lying who would imagine such a thing?" she said pushing her inkstone away. "For my part I accept them as completely true."

These are Tamakazura's words. The habitual liar, she says, as a matter of course doubts everyone's words; he assumes everyone to be a liar or schemer like himself. However, the commentaries which say this statement refers to Genji are mistaken. If she were speaking of Genji she would use the honorific verb tamau (言ふ); but as she uses

the verb haberu (有る); we know she is speaking only of people in general. The words "Isn't it rather" are blurted out sulkily. She "pushes away her inkstone" because he chides her for "copying away quite unaware that your hair is all in a tangle." This is all part of her pouting manner.

"Yes, it was bad of me to speak ill of these books, wasn't it? Why, everything that has gone on since the age of the gods is recorded in them, I would imagine. The histories of Japan are really very one-sided. But these must give you all the choice little details," he said with a smile.

Here Genji speaks again. When Tamakazura says sulkily, "I believe they are all true," he returns playfully, "Why yes indeed." His attitude is clear from the fact that he smiles. This is the author's way of forestalling the derision of those who might think that in praising novels too extravagantly and saying only good of them, she considers the Genji monogatari, with all its "choice little details," even better than the official histories.

"At any rate, they do not simply relate the events of some person's life exactly as they happened. Rather I think that some things the author has seen and heard of the lives of men, be they good or evil, so intrigue him that he cannot shut them away in his heart, but feels he must pass them on to generations to come — and so he sets out to tell us his story."

The transition from "he said with a smile" to this passage seems a bit abrupt. Perhaps this is due to the loss of a few words

in between. Whether or not this is the case, the force of the transition would be clearer if we were to add a few words to the effect that "I was only joking, of course, for in fact" In any case, Genji's denigration of the novel does not at all represent his true feelings. He sees Tamakazura completely absorbed in copying and reading novels, and in jest purposely speaks ill of them. This passage, however, is a serious discussion of his views of the novel. There are all sorts of novels, most of which are pure fabrication; but here Murasaki Shikibu seems to be describing something that actually happened in order to make clear her underlying intentions in writing the Genji monogatari. The matter of "good and evil" requires special attention. As another passage of the same sort occurs below, I shall discuss this matter in greater detail later. The "things he has seen or heard that so intrigue him . . ." are those events which one cannot shut away in one's heart. The things one sees, hears, or experiences — whether joyful, fascinating, strange, amusing, frightening, loathesome, depressing, or sad — cannot, when one is deeply moved by them, be shut away in the heart. We wish to tell someone, or write them down and show someone. This sets our hearts at ease [kokoro o sawayagu] as nothing else does, and when the listener or reader is moved to feel as we have felt ["ge ni" to kanzureba] our relief is still greater. This we can see from the following examples.

In "Kiritsubo" 桐壺 it says: ⁴²²

"I should like very much to talk with you again, for it always clears away at least a small part of that darkness

of our own thoughts that is so hard to bear; so please do visit me privately sometime when you are at leisure."

In "Sawarabi" 早蕨 it says: ⁴²³

The Middle Counsellor [Kaoru, 藤.] was longing to tell someone the thoughts pent up in his heart, and so set out to call upon the Prince [Niou, 藤].

And again: ⁴²⁴

His [Niou's] words of commiseration dispelled the very depths of his depression and cleared away his sadness . . . so that bit by bit he revealed to him the thoughts that seemed to choke his very heart, and felt such comfort and relief as he had never known before.

In "Yadorigi" it says: ⁴²⁵

"I [Naka no Kimi] felt it would be most wretched of me were I to keep silence as I usually do, without expressing to you at least some small part of the gratitude I feel for all that you did on my behalf the other day."

In "Tenarai" it says: ⁴²⁶

She [Ukifune] had never been the sort who could put her thoughts into proper words when talking with others; much less was there anyone here who might be counted on to hear her out with sympathy and understanding. Her only recourse was to turn to her inkstone, and when her grief seemed more than she could bear, to write down as best she could — as one does in writing practice — whatever jumbled thoughts might come to mind.

"Writing practice" here means amusing oneself by writing down with no forethought whatever comes to mind.

Now, the difficulty of shutting away in one's heart anything which has deeply moved one remains the same today, even with the shallowest people. For example, when we see or hear of something unusual or strange, even if it has nothing to do with ourselves, we are not content simply to think to ourselves "How strange, how unusual." Invariably, we want to tell someone else just as quickly as we can. Though telling someone else is of no benefit whatever, either to ourselves or to the other person, in doing so our hearts are relieved. This is simply the nature of the human emotions [hito no kokoro no onozukara no koto]. The composition of poetry has the same effect.

The underlying meaning here is as follows: The passage above in which she speaks of persons "accustomed to lying" is critical of the novel; here she means to answer this criticism. Murasaki Shikibu here sets forth her own intentions in writing the Genji monogatari. This novel, she says, is indeed a complete fiction [mina sorogoto]; but it is not groundless nonsense. She does not state actual names or describe events as they actually happened. They are events such as one sees or hears of every day in this world — events that so intrigue us we wish to pass them on to ages to come. As she could not bear to shut these up in her heart, she wrote them out in the form of a novel. You must realize, therefore, she would say, that fiction though it is, false it is not [soragoto nagara soragoto ni arazu]. You may wonder, then, if these are all events that Murasaki Shikibu herself saw or heard of in her own time, and wrote down

concealing only the names. But such was not the case. They represent no particular persons or events, but merely such things as one sees or hears of every day in this world, things by which she was deeply moved and which she could not let pass. She would thus create a certain person or event, commit her thoughts to that person, and so express what was in her heart.

"Should he wish to describe someone favorably, he will select every good quality imaginable,"

The novel being a fictional creation, when the author sets out to speak well of a person, she may select all of the good qualities in the world, assign them to a single character, and speak of him only in the best of terms.

In its underlying sense, this passage applies to Genji — to his deeds and thoughts, needless to say, as well as to his appearance, his rank, and his brilliant career. She attributes to him every good thing in the world. This she does to deepen the pathos, and thus to move the reader more deeply [mono no aware o fukaku shite yomu hito o fukaku kanzeshimen].

"Or instead he may defer to the tastes of the reader,"

Considering the phrase that follows, we might expect the author here to say, in contrast with her remarks on the portrayal of a good character, "and should he wish to speak ill of someone" But she does not. This is an interesting example of Murasaki Shikibu's forethought. Generally it is best not to speak openly of other people's faults. She thus does not go out of her way to speak ill of anyone,

but rather defers to the judgement of others in determining whether a person or action is bad. "Defer to the tastes of the reader . . ." means she speaks not according to her own inclinations, but in accord with what others say. A similar use of the term is found in "Momiji no ga" 紅葉 427 where it says:

He deferred to the wishes of his companion, and they exchanged inconsequential jests.

". . . and include all manner of evil and strange things."

"Evil" does not necessarily mean evil deeds as they are described in the usual Confucian and Buddhist works. I shall speak of this matter in detail later.

In its underlying sense, this passage applies to such characters as Suetsumuhana and Ōmi no Kimi, and comprises as well everything described in bad terms. She does not create some evil character with the intent of criticizing him; but to arouse the reader's interest she will from time to time write of strange and evil things. We can see the author's intentions in the phrases "defer to the tastes of the reader" and "strange things."

Now, in the two categories of writing described above, that which "shows us people's feelings in so real a manner as to make us feel that this is life as it really is," and that which "dazzles us with its grandiloquence", as well as in the present categories of "good" and "evil" — in both cases, the former category describes the spirit in which novels are read and the latter the spirit in which they are written. If we consider this in conjunction with the previous passages, we realize that the depiction of "all the good

qualities imaginable" is for the purpose of "showing us people's feelings in so real a manner as to make us feel that this is life as it really is," and thus to move the reader; while the depiction of "all manner of evil and strange things" is not the main intention of the novel. This we realize from her statements above that it "dazzles us" but "upon a calmer hearing we would only be annoyed, though at first we are fascinated."

"But in neither case will he depart from the realm of the world we live in."

Everything of which the author writes, be it good or be it evil, will be the ordinary stuff of life, not that which could never happen in this world.

"In other courts, their scholarship and their ways of writing differ from ours."

"Other courts" means foreign countries. "Scholarship" means learning acquired by a person, as it always does in novels. "Ways of writing" refers to the nature of their literature. "Differ" applies to both "scholarship" and "ways of writing." To interpret this as meaning "that which is written by a person of learning" does not make sense.

Now, regarding these differences in scholarship and differences in ways of writing, foreign scholarship and foreign ways of writing, the author says, differ drastically in nature from our novels and the kind of writing that characterizes them. Foreign books tend mainly to carping arguments of questions of good and evil, right and wrong.

They probe into the principles of things, every man disputing against every other, all putting on airs of omniscience. We speak of their "tradition of poetical elegance and refinement," but it differs completely from the poetry of our own land. The inmost corners of the heart are left hidden and unspoken; their poets merely adorn the surface and carry on in a self-important manner. The novels of our own country, dealing as they do with life in this world and the human emotions, may often be frivolous and insubstantial, but never are they pompous, pedantic, or overbearing. In this respect their "way of writing" differs from that of foreign countries.

"And even in Japan our novels of today differ from those of the past."

. . . . Not only do our novels differ from the books of China, even the books of our country differ in the way they are written between past and present The Japanese books of the past to which she refers are probably the official histories mentioned previously in this passage. These were written in Chinese and the events which they describe are quite different from those in the novels. The "books of today" are novels; for by comparison with the old official histories even the oldest of the novels would have been considered modern. In its underlying sense, this passage, where it speaks of "novels of today," refers to the Genji monogatari, which Murasaki was then in the process of writing.

"And then of course there is the gap between shallow and deeper works."

The "deeper works" are foreign books and books like the official histories — books written in Chinese, which for women and children are difficult to understand. The "shallow" writings are novels written in the everyday language just as it is spoken, using the women's script. As she does not merely say "deep" and "shallow," but actually says deep and shallow "words," [koto こと] we know that she speaks of language.

"But to dismiss them all as empty fabrications [soragoto] runs counter to the truth of the matter."

"Runs counter to the truth of the matter" means much the same as when in common speech we say "misunderstand." In its underlying sense, everything from "At any rate, they do not simply relate the events of some person's life" is a reply to the charge that the novel is "empty fabrication" [soragoto]; this passage concludes that reply. The passage that follows illustrates the reason novels should not be dismissed even if they are fabrications.

"Even in the Holy Law which the Buddha in his righteousness has expounded to us, there are what we call the Partial Truths [hoben 方便]."

. . . . In the Holy Law which the Buddha in his righteousness has expounded to us we would not expect to find untruths [soragoto]; but even there there are the Partial Truths. And so the common man may well ask: are not these Partial Truths fabricated of events that never happened? Now although untruth and Partial Truth may in one sense amount to the same thing, the spirit that informs them is

different. Untruth is a form of falsehood [mōgo 妄語], the utterance of which is a sin. The Partial Truths are meant to bring benefit to the hearer.

The underlying sense of this passage is as follows: the novel is criticized for being untrue. In reply, the author says it is not the sort of work that can be called completely untrue. It depicts all manner of things, both good and evil, for the purpose of revealing to people the workings of the emotions [mono no aware o shirashimen tame]; and so is comparable to the Partial Truths of the Buddha.

"... Which, owing to the contradictions they contain, the unenlightened doubtless view with suspicion."

The unenlightened who fail to understand the true nature of the Partial Truths in the teachings of the Buddha will be skeptical of the inconsistencies found between one scripture and another. The underlying intent here is merely to pose an objection to this novel.

"In the Vaipulya sutras [Hōdōkyō 方等經] these are numerous,"

Partial Truths, she says, are particularly numerous in the Vaipulya [Mahāyāna] portion of the scriptures.

"But in the final analysis, they all share a single aim."

The Partial Truths may appear to differ from the true teachings; in the final analysis, however, they are of the same import.

"The disparity between enlightenment and earthly lust,

you see, corresponds to the difference between the good and evil of the people in novels."

The "single aim" alludes to the enlightenment and earthly lust spoken of here. The Buddhist law contains a variety of Partial Truths, and though these appear to be here and there contradictory, they are in the final analysis the same as true teachings, and have the single aim of teaching the disparity between enlightenment and earthly lust. This example is then applied to the novel The "difference" here means that the depiction of the difference between good and evil in the people in novels is like the teaching of the disparity between enlightenment and earthly lust in the Buddhist teachings. Someone once asked me, "In that case, since the novel in the final analysis illustrates good and evil in men, too, it 'encourages good and chastises evil,' just as Chinese writings do. Why then do you say the novel differs sharply from Confucian and Buddhist works?" The answer is, as I have said above, that the good and evil described in novels are not the same as the good and evil, right and wrong described in Confucian and Buddhist works. Hence its nature is different. Murasaki's underlying meaning here is the same as her surface meaning.

"Given its fair due, nothing whatever is utterly empty of benefit." Thus did he show that the novel serves an important purpose.

By "given its fair due" she means: although one might think the novel trivial and worthless, when we consider it fairly and with reason, we see that such is not the case. "Serves an important

purpose" means it is not a trivial amusement, but something that cannot be done without. Novels may be the playthings of women and children, but still, Genji maintains, we could not get by without reading them. The conclusion has been carefully calculated by Murasaki Shikibu. Previously she has spoken of the Genji monogatari as though it were of some worth, but in truth, she says, it is frivolous and worthless. With this humble touch, she puts her brush aside.

The significance of this passage should be savoured carefully until it is understood. As I have said repeatedly, this section of "Hotaru," in its underlying sense, describes the author's attitude in writing the novel. And the manner in which she does this — with no proclamation of her general purpose, either at the beginning of the book or the end; but by revealing it subtly and unobtrusively, in a passage of no particular importance — is simply magnificent.

Now the commentaries over the years have merely skimmed over this passage, explicating only the surface meaning, without making clear the author's underlying intent. Moreover, they are all of them replete with errors, particularly in the notes to the passage comparing the novel with the teachings of Buddhism. In the most pretentious manner, they explicate those terms having to do with the scriptures, but not one of them hits upon the significance of the comparison, as we have here discussed it. Yet if the meaning of this passage is not made clear, neither will the import of the entire Genji monogatari be clear. I should therefore like to point out just a few of the errors in these commentaries.

First of all, the passage which speaks of the "Buddha in his righteousness" is annotated with citations from the scriptures and grand statements about the Buddha, but all of them miss the point. The word "righteous" is used in the novel in its everyday sense of upright and good, and carries no more profound meaning than that.

Regarding Partial Truth: in the doctrines of the Lotus Sect, it is quite correct to speak of the Lotus Sutra as the Ultimate Truth and of all previous scriptures as Partial Truth; but it is a great mistake to use this as a basis for taking the Partial Truth spoken of in this passage to mean The Lesser Vehicle of Buddhism. The Partial Truths spoken of here are of the sort found in all the scriptures. They are parables fabricated for the purpose of saving the masses. Discussion of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles,⁴²⁸ the Four Teachings,⁴²⁹ the Five Ages⁴³⁰ is irrelevant here, and quite out of place.

Further, the "unenlightened" does sometimes refer to those who during the lifetime of the Buddha attended his meetings and listened to his sermons, but here it simply means those in the present day who read or listen to the Buddhist scriptures. This we know from the phrase "doubtless view with suspicion."

"In the final analysis they all share a single aim" is interpreted as meaning "the Teachings of the Five Ages all lead to the single truth of the Lotus," or "in the final analysis all is nothingness," or "the myriad laws are all as one," none of which fits this passage.

And in the passage that reads "the disparity between enlightenment and earthly lust," some will cite the story of the dragon

lady who attained Buddhahood,⁸⁵ and state that there is no distinction between enlightenment and earthly lust. This interpretation is in direct opposition to the statement that there is a "disparity" — a gross mistake. The "disparity between enlightenment and earthly lust" is compared to the good and evil of the people in the novel, but to say that there is "no distinction" amounts to saying that there is also no distinction between the good and evil of the people, does it not? At any rate, to depart from the meaning of the text, and to treat only those parts having to do with the scriptures as having any deep meaning is most irresponsible.

The notion that Murasaki Shikibu was in receipt of a dispensation from the Tendai sect and deeply learned in its doctrines, and thus wrote everything in accordance with the holy law of Tendai, is extremely foolish. This attempt to lavish praise upon Murasaki Shikibu, only betrays her purposes. She herself had a strong distaste for women who boasted of their learning and put on airs of wisdom. We see evidence of this in chapter after chapter of the Genji, and in her own diary she speaks often of it. Why then would she act so pompously herself? More particularly, would Genji really be citing fine points of Buddhist theology in a conversation with so young a lady as ~~Tamakura~~? What could be more inappropriate to the novel than this?

In the passage from "Hotaru" cited above wherein it speaks of events "in the lives of men, be they good or evil," or "should he wish to describe someone favorably, he will select every good quality imaginable" or of "good and evil of the people in novels" — in these and most other such passages in the novel, the "good" and "evil" are

not the same as the good and evil described in Confucian and Buddhist works; and thus, in many passages, it would be a mistake to interpret the good and evil in the novel strictly in the Confucian or Buddhist sense.

First of all, good and evil extend to all manner of concerns. Even with regard to people, they need not apply only to thoughts and deeds. There are good and bad in rank and social position, the noble being good, and the lowly bad. In the novel, those of high rank are called the "good people," while in our own everyday speech we speak of "good family," or of "good or bad standing." Needless to say, we speak also of good and bad appearance. Again, long life, wealth, and prosperity and the acquisition of property are all good things; while short life, poverty, failure, loss of property, as well as illness, disaster, and the like are all bad things.

Nor is this so only in human affairs. Clothing, furniture, houses, and countless other such things all have their good and their bad. They are by no means limited to the realm of human thoughts and deeds. Moreover, good and evil change with the time and the situation. For example, an arrow is good if it penetrates its mark, while armour is good if it is impenetrable. On a hot summer day, that which is cool is good, while in the cold of winter, that which is hot is good. One travelling at night will consider darkness bad; but one seeking to conceal himself will consider moonlight bad. And so it is in all matters.

Thus too good and evil in men's thoughts and deeds, although the contrast is not as complete, yet will differ in points depending upon doctrine. What Confucianism considers good, Buddhism may

consider bad; while what Buddhism considers good, Confucianism may consider bad. There is no absolute agreement. Likewise, what is considered good or evil in the novel may at times differ from Confucian and Buddhist concepts of good and evil.

What sorts of thoughts and deeds, then, are considered good and evil in the novel? Generally speaking, those who know what it means to be moved by things [mono no aware o shiri], who have compassion [nasake arite], and who are alive to the feelings of others [yo no hito no kokoro ni kanaeru] are regarded as good; whereas those who do not know what it means to be moved by things, are compassionless and insensitive to the feelings of others, are regarded as bad. Having said this much, there may appear to be no great difference from the good and evil of Confucianism and Buddhism; but if we go on and state the case more precisely, we find that sensitivity and insensitivity to the feelings of others in many cases do not correspond to Confucian and Buddhist concepts of good and evil. Moreover, even when it treats of good and evil, the novel does so in gentle and moderate terms, rather than in the overbearing manner of a Confucian disputation.

The main object of the novel, then, is the understanding of what it means to be moved by things [mono no aware o shiru]; and hence it often stands in opposition to the teachings of Confucianism and Buddhism. When a man is moved by something, whether for good or bad, right or wrong, his feelings may run counter to reason. Though it is improper thus to be moved, man's emotions do not always follow the dictates of his mind. They have a power of their own, and are difficult to suppress. For instance, Genji's attraction to Utsusemi,

Oborozukiyo, and Fujitsubo, and his affairs with these ladies, are, from the Buddhist and Confucian point of view, the most sinful and immoral acts imaginable. However good he might be in other respects, they would find it difficult to call him a "good person." But in the novel his sinfulness and immorality are given no particular prominence; rather his great depth of feeling [mono no aware no fukaki kata] is described again and again. Genji is depicted as the very model of the "good person," possessing every good quality imaginable. This, then, is the main intent of the novel, and the good and evil it depicts is of another sort than that in Confucian and Buddhist works.

Yet, it does not present such immorality as good. The evil in Genji's deeds would be plain to see even if it were never mentioned. As there are books enough discussing such sins, there is no need to go so far afield as to a novel for information of this sort. The novel is not so inflexible a thing as the Confucian or Buddhist Way; it does not require that a man leave behind earthly lust that he may gain enlightenment, or that he "regulate his country, his family, and his person." It is simply a story of life in this world, and so leaves aside questions of good and evil. Rather than concern itself with such matters as these, it depicts the virtues of knowing what it is to be moved by things [mono no aware o shireru kata].

In this respect, the novel may be likened to the man who wishes to enjoy the lotus flower, and so must keep a store of muddy water, foul and filthy though it may be. It is not the mud — the illicit love depicted in the novel — that we admire; it is the flower that it nurtures — the flower of the emotions it arouses [mono no

aware no hana]. Genji's conduct is like the lotus flower, which grows up from the muddy water, yet blooms with a beauty and fragrance unlike any other in the world. Nothing is said of the water's filth; the novel dwells instead upon Genji's deep compassion and his awareness of what it means to be moved by things [nasake fukaku, mono no aware o shireru kata], and holds him up as the model of the good man. I hardly need say more, but if I may cite one or two more examples:

In "Suna":⁴³¹

His exile to this distant shore was a great disappointment to society, and many within their hearts reviled the throne for it.

In "Akashi":⁴³²

That year natural portents were frequently seen at court, and there was great unrest amongst the people. On the night of the thirteenth day of the third month, lightning flashed and a violent rainstorm came up

And again:⁴³³

Since the previous year, the empress had been troubled by specters, and there had been frequent portents and disturbances.

And again:⁴³⁴

His Majesty's eye ailment had lately grown much worse.

In "Yomogiu":⁴³⁵

When it became known that he was pardoned and would be returning to the capital, everyone in the land was beside himself with joy.

In "Makibashira":⁴³⁶

His Lordship, who had never been the object of public criticism

We see from the "Akashi" passages that even the gods took pity upon Genji. If the author had intended to convey a Confucian or Buddhist moral, why would she write of the gods, the buddhas, and the

Heavens taking pity upon a man guilty of such grievous immorality?

Again, three women are singled out as examples of good people, the Imperial Consort Fujitsubo, the Lady Murasaki, and the Vestal Asagao. Fujitsubo, for example, is praised in "Usugumo":⁴³⁷

She was remarkable amongst those of exalted position for her kindness and consideration toward everyone. For the high and mighty to bring pain and woe to their inferiors has always been the way of the world. Never, however, was she guilty of the slightest license of this sort, nor would she allow anything to be done for her that might bring pain to the people Even the hardened mountain ascetics lamented her death, and when the time came for her funeral there was a general mourning, for there were none who were not grieved.

If this were meant to be in the same spirit as Confucianism or Buddhism, surely the author would not have depicted such a fine person in such an immoral situation as her affair with Genji; nor would she have cited her as an example of the good person. Thus we can see how great is the difference between the good and evil in the novel, and the good and evil of Confucianism and Buddhism. And when we consider this along with the case of Kashiwagi, which I shall cite further on, we realize that the main purpose of the novel is the depiction of the workings of the emotions [mono no aware]. But our learned men down through the ages have all been adherents of the severely doctrinaire writings of Confucianism and Buddhism, and have based all their arguments upon them. They have pursued the most fruitless trains of thought, never thinking to investigate the nature of the novel. Why were there none among them to notice this thing I have called mono no aware? I shall discuss mono no aware in some

detail in the following chapter.