

Discovering the Educational Power of Literature: Coluccio Salutati and Motoori Norinaga

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Today, teaching literature has an established place within the school and university curricula in Western and East Asian countries. This seems so natural that we take the educational role of literature for granted. However, history teaches us that elevating literature to an academic subject required a defense of literature against the critical voices raised by philosophy and religion. This criticism was centered on the moral value of literature. This paper explores two prominent defenders of literature in the West and the East: Coluccio Salutati (1332-1406) and Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). Salutati defended the educational significance of ancient poetry against the criticism from Scholasticism, while Norinaga defended The Tale of Genji against the criticism from Buddhism and Confucianism. The paper consists of two parts. The first part is dedicated to the analysis of the arguments deployed by Salutati and Norinaga in defense of literature. Whereas Salutati insists on the philosophical nature of poetry as allegory, Norinaga sees the educational significance of The Tale of Genji in teaching of mono no aware. The second part digs deeper and reveals the respective horizon of each position as the tradition of philosophy and the tradition of waka poetry.

Keywords: literature and education; philosophy of literature; humanistic education; allegory; *monono aware*

Introduction

This paper intends to review the educational role of literature through the mirror of history. Even though the wide-spread, almost universal presence of poetry and music in early civilizations suggests that poets played a significant role in forming the ethos of people, the philosophical reflections of later ages failed to give proper account to their educational signif-

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icance. The most eminent and influential example is Plato. In *The Republic*, while acknowledging the educational importance of Homer in his days as “the teacher of Hellas.” Plato criticized him harshly (Jaeger, 1973, pp. 63-88; 801-821; 966-974). In East Asia, the situation was somewhat better for poetry. Confucius assigned the ancient *Odes* the highest place in education (*Analects*, 2, 2; 8, 8; 16,13). However, he did not accept poetry outright, praising poems that were “pleasing without being excessive” and “mournful without being injurious” (*Analects*, 3, 20). Both Plato and Confucius acknowledged the educational power of poetry. Even more, they feared the negative influence of immoral poetry and fiercely rejected it (Plato) or gently put it aside (Confucius). In particular, the works that had immoral contents and/or strong appeals to passion became the objects of censorship.

This initial tension between philosophy and poetry significantly affected the status of poetry in education. The suspicion against poetry (together with its related subject, rhetoric) was especially strong in the West. This suspicion later shifted to target the new genre of literature, the novel (Taylor, 1943). In the Far East, poetry has enjoyed a more favorable status. However, the original content of poetry often had to be reinterpreted to fit the prevailing morality. This is especially so in the case of the *Odes*, the oldest collection of Chinese poems, which date back to the ninth century BCE. After the death of Confucius, who was passionately fond of them, the *Odes* was canonized as one of the five Confucian Scriptures. In this process, it was interpreted as “expressions of political and social criticism” (Shirakawa, 1970, p. 6). It is only in the last century that scholars broached a new interpretation to read the *Odes* as “ancient songs” comparable with the *Vedas*, the Homeric epics, the Old Testament, and the *Man'yōshū* (Shirakawa, 1970).

Given this history of interpretation, it seems almost a miracle that literature could attain a crucial role in the history of education. And yet, this miracle happened. Today, reading great works of literature has a fixed place in education. This is the heritage won by our predecessors. A fierce spiritual battle in the early modern era finally bestowed on literature an important role for the formation of humanity.

It is an interesting coincidence that similar battles were fought in both corners of the Eurasian regions with a time lag of 300 years. One battle took place in Italy in the early fifteenth century pioneered by Coluccio Salutati (1332-1406). Another spiritual battle took place in eighteenth-century Japan led by Motoori Norinaga (1730-1801). A comparison of the two movements illustrates their respective features.

This paper consists of two parts, each of which comprises two sections. The first part is dedicated to the analysis of the arguments. The first section examines Salutati's defense of ancient poetry in response to the fierce criticism by Giovanni da San Miniato and Giovanni Dominici. Salutati is a major figure in early humanism and exerted great influence on establishing humanistic studies in Western Europe. The examination uncovers three features that are peculiar to his defense. The second section examines the argument of Norinaga in defence of the value of the novel, *The Tale of Genji*, against the criticism from Buddhists and Confucians. Norinaga is one of the most eminent philologists and humanists in Japanese history (Kobayashi, 2002; Maruya, 2013). His defense of *The Tale of Genji* has a remarkable feature: the affirmation of our pathetic existence. This is a feature absent in Salutati.

The second part brings to light the broader historical horizons that motivated the thought of Salutati and Norinaga respectively. The first section reveals the strong influence of the philosophical tradition in the West, which has left marks on the interpretation of poetry

throughout history. The section also examines the important role that Salutati's interpretation of poetry as allegory played in the Renaissance. The second section reveals the tradition of waka poetry as the background of Norinaga's thought. The section also contains a brief examination of the Aristotelian concept of *ethos*. This is necessary to understand the moral significance of Norinaga's theory of feeling.

1. Analysis of Arguments

1.1 Coluccio Salutati's Defense of Poetry

The history of humanism is colored by polemics. Humanists were by no means cool-headed intellectuals but rather hot-tempered avant-garde thinkers. They were deeply dissatisfied with traditional education and attacked and ridiculed it with fervor that would not be tolerated in today's academic world. The polemics scattered in the writings of humanists, from Petrarch to Rabelais, were more than outlets of their dissatisfaction: they played the positive role of clarifying their own position (Garin, 1976, chap. 2). One of the most disputed themes of controversy concerned the educational role of poetry (Garin, 1958, pp. 1-89; Grendler, 1980, pp. 235-244).

Coluccio Salutati is one of the most influential figures of humanism. In his youth, he was deeply influenced by Petrarch and was personally acquainted with Boccaccio. From these two renowned writers, Salutati inherited a great passion for the study of ancient literature. He became chancellor of the Republic of Florence, an important position comparable with Minister of Foreign Affairs today. He organized around him a humanistic circle and inspired gifted youths such as Leonardo Bruni and Pier Paolo Vergerio to take up humanistic studies. He also invited a Byzantine philosopher, Manuel Chrysoloras, to teach ancient Greek in the university. As the first introduction of Greek into the curriculum, this had immense influence on the culture and education of modern Europe.

Salutati wrote several books, of which *De laboribus Herculis* (*On the Labor of Hercules*) is the most famous. This unfinished work interprets the myth of Hercules as an allegory for a life dedicated to acquiring virtue. His most important work is the *Epistolario*, a collection that contains 344 letters (both private and public) in Latin, including the two letters examined here. They are also included in Garin (1958, pp. 52-60) together with an Italian translation. These two letters are byproducts of Salutati's fierce polemic against two eminent scholars of the age, Giovanni da San Miniato and Giovanni Dominici (Mésontiat, 1984). As renowned clergy members, highly trained in scholasticism, they had launched an intellectual crusade against the humanists who placed high value on teaching ancient poetry to children. For them, ancient poetry was teeming with immoral passages that would corrupt the soul of the young readers.

Salutati's main argument in the two letters can be categorized in the following three points.

a) Poetry as allegory

In the beginning of the Letter to Giovanni da San Miniato, Salutati accuses him of a double standard. For Salutati, Giovanni is too severe to the humanists while tolerating "abductions, adulteries, and rapes" in the Bible (Garin, 1958, pp. 52-53). Giovanni tolerates the apparently immoral passages of the Bible as allegory, while rejecting allegorical readings of ancient po-

etry. The strategy of Salutati in his polemics with Church fathers can be discerned clearly here. Salutati regards poetry as allegorical in its essence. This interpretation saves poetry from the charges of immorality. All the apparently immoral passages of poetry can be interpreted as allegories of a moral message. As Salutati's ironic remark shows, this strategy was used by Giovanni himself. In fact, as Curtius pointed out in his monumental work, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Curtius, 2013, chap. 11), allegorical interpretations had been applied to pagan poetry (Homer) and the Bible since antiquity. Ancient philosophers, bewildered by the immoral deeds of the Greek gods, regarded them as allegory. Early Christian fathers, perplexed by the heinous acts of some of the patriarchs, also resorted to the same strategy. Allegorical interpretation regarded the Bible as a kind of poetry, especially with regard to the apparently poetical passages of the Bible such as the *Song of Solomon*. Salutati emphasizes the allegorical power of poetry as follows:

Est...poetica sermocinalis quedam ars atque facultas...bilinguis: exterius unum exhibens, aliud autem intrinseca ratione significans; semper in figura loquens ac sepe numero versibus alligans, si quid refert. In cuius quidem artis officio nescio quid dici possit contra fidem esse vel quod sacris litteris sit adversum; maxime cum certum sit ipsam divinam Scripturam nichil aliud esse quam poeticam... (Garin, 1958, pp. 64-65)

(Poetry is a bilingual art and faculty of speech (...) it signifies externally one thing and through inner reason another thing. It always talks in images and often uses verse. I can never understand what could be contrary to faith or adverse to the Holy Scripture in this art, especially given that the Holy Scripture is without doubt a poetical composition.)

b) Superiority of poetry over philosophy

The second feature of Salutati's argument is his assertion of the superiority of poetry over philosophy. His argument is full of polemical spirit against his opponents. Scholastic scholars inherited the traditional criticism deployed by philosophy against poetry. This criticism goes back to Plato and had immense influence on the history of the polemics between philosophy and poetry. Salutati's reasoning of the superiority of poetry over philosophy may sound intriguing to modern readers. In the Letter to Giovanni da San Miniato, Salutati says that poetry is superior to philosophy because poetry requires philosophy for its perfection, but not the other way around (Garin, 1958, pp. 56-57). To put it more simply: a poet must be a philosopher, but a philosopher does not need to be (and usually is not) a poet. This argument may not seem convincing to us, because our understanding of science as a discipline is strongly influenced by Kantian criticism, Weberian professionalism, and liberal egalitarianism. For us, the value of a discipline is not determined by the number of subjects it covers but by the exactness that can stand against critical examination. As well, the debate about which discipline is superior hurts our egalitarian sensitivity, which would prefer to bestow equal value on each profession. But Salutati's position makes sense if we set it within the tradition, within which it is situated: the tradition of liberal arts originating in ancient Greece and Rome. This tradition is avowedly anti-specialist. Specialization in ancient Greece and Rome was characteristic of slave labor. Liberal arts were born out of this anti-specialist culture and highly recommended as the necessary backbone of an educated person. However, as Cicero explicitly said, an educated person should not spend too much time on one subject because that would make him look too professional, specialist, and consequently (in the Roman understanding) "servile." (*De Oratore*, III, 81-89) Seen from this tradition, poetry, which includes

the knowledge of many disciplines including philosophy, is more liberal (noble) than philosophy, which has become a specialized discipline. This brings us to the third feature of poetry.

c) Poetry and liberal arts

The ideal of an educated citizen with a comprehensive knowledge of liberal arts was developed by Cicero in *De Oratore (On the Orator)*, a treatise on the ideal orator (Cicero, 2011). The Ciceronian orator is not a specialist of speech. His eloquence is based on a rich knowledge of philosophy, history, laws, and liberal arts. Salutati, an avid reader of Cicero, must have known this, even though the discovery of the complete version of *De Oratore* occurred after his death in 1421 (Grendler, 1980, pp. 121-124). Salutati's poet shares many of the features of the Ciceronian orator. Against this backdrop, we can understand why Salutati plunges himself into an extensive discussion in which he examines why the knowledge of each liberal art is found in poetry. This is the argument that occupies much of his letter to Giovanni Dominici (Garin, 1958, pp. 58-69). Salutati asserts fervently that poetry reunites the disciplines of trivium and quadrivium: the coherence of grammar, propriety of logic, ornament of rhetoric, numbers of arithmetic, figures of geometry, images of astronomy, and melody of music. This makes a poet the possessor of universal knowledge, human and divine.

1.2 Motoori Norinaga's Defense of *The Tale of Genji*

The role played by Motoori Norinaga in the history of Japanese thought is somewhat like that of the Renaissance humanists. Both Norinaga and the humanists took an active part in reviving the traditions of their country. Norinaga devoted his life to the interpretation of the *Kojiki* and other ancient Japanese texts. The *Kojiki* is the oldest Japanese text written in Chinese characters, which were used to transliterate the oral Japanese language. Norinaga had to face the difficult task of reconstructing the original sounds through the maze of Chinese characters. Some centuries before Norinaga, the humanists in Europe devoted themselves to rediscovering and reconstructing the ancient texts of Latin and Greek writers. Both Norinaga and the humanists were experienced philologists who had fine ears to appreciate the meaning and the sound of a lost language. Both played important roles in reevaluating an ancient tradition as an essential part of their own cultures and education.

There is one more important similarity between the humanists and Norinaga: they had similar enemies and critics (Kato, 2014). The humanists faced criticism from the monks and scholars influenced by Scholastic philosophy. Norinaga's main enemies were the contemporary Japanese scholars influenced by Zhu Xi (Neo-Confucian) philosophy, which shares similar characteristics with its Western counterpart. Both Zhu Xi and Scholastic philosophy were metaphysical and highly systematic. Both placed a metaphysical and moral yoke upon the arts. They valued works of arts (pagan arts of Greece and Rome and ancient Japanese literature) from the official doctrine of Scholasticism or Neo-Confucianism. This led naturally to sharp criticism against the arts that did not belong to their tradition: judged from the official doctrine they looked suspicious and immoral. From today's point of view, we may easily criticize the views of Scholasticism and Neo-Confucianism. But in the ages of the humanists and Norinaga, Scholastic and Neo-Confucian metaphysics retained a strong influence.

Despite these similarities with the humanists, Norinaga took a completely different strategy to answer his critics. Whereas the humanists tried to accommodate Scholasticism by emphasizing the character of poetry as an allegory, Norinaga rejected this interpretation. His rejection of allegorical interpretations is remarkable because it ran counter to the stances of

previous scholars. Thinking about the allegorical interpretation of *The Tale of Genji* done by preceding scholars, Norinaga says in the *Tama no Ogushi*:

There have been many interpretations over the years of the purpose of this tale. But all of these interpretations have been based not on a consideration of the novel itself but rather on the novel as seen from the point of view of Confucian and Buddhist works, and thus they do not represent the true purpose of the author. (Keene, 1988, p. 85; trans. Ryusaku Tsunoda)

Norinaga's proposal was to disregard Buddhist and Confucian moral criterion and to immerse oneself in the world of feeling or pathos. In the *Shibun Yoryo*, an important work on *The Tale of Genji*, Norinaga asserts the absolute freedom of poetry and novel from "the way of Buddhism and Confucianism." Against the list of Good and Evil of Buddhism and Confucianism, which is aimed at the control and/or suppression of desires, Norinaga asserts that novels have a different understanding of Good and Evil, which is based on *mono no aware* (Norinaga, 2010, p. 55, 62, 64). Thus, he considers Prince Genji a good person despite his incestuous love affair, because he understood *mono no aware* (Norinaga, 2010, p. 69). Donald Keene translated *mono no aware* as "sensitivity to things" (Keene, 1988, pp. 85–86). The word *aware* denotes all types of deep feelings: joy, love, sorrow, anger, admiration of the beautiful, etc.

Norinaga expounds *mono no aware* explicitly in the *Ishinokami Sasamegoto*, a treatise on waka (Japanese poetry) written in 1763, the same year as the *Shibun Yoryo* (Koyasu, 2005, pp. 78–96). The word *mono* indicates all sorts of things we encounter in our lives. In the same treatise, Norinaga explains, "whenever the heart moves and feels deeply joy or sorrow, this amounts to understanding *mono no aware*" (Norinaga, 2003, pp. 176–179).

According to Norinaga, a novel such as *The Tale of Genji* expresses *mono no aware* in different phases of life, such as love affairs, religious ceremonies, and appreciation of nature (Norinaga, 2010, pp. 65–66, 95–96). Readers learn to appreciate the refined manners and feelings of ancient days and cultivate their *mono no aware* (Koyasu, 2010, p. 321). As a result, they can share these multifaceted feelings with others. In addition, they have cultivated the sensitivity toward the seasons and their flowers, birds, different phases of the moon, etc. Daily life offers many occasions for these feelings. By discovering these feelings, we learn "the way of the world" and the most profound human emotions (Norinaga, 2010, pp. 33–34). This has educational significance.

By depicting *mono no aware*, a novel lets the reader understand it. Therefore, if we dare to talk about teaching (even though novels are not primarily for the sake of teaching), the teaching of novels is not that of Buddhism and Confucianism but that of *mono no aware*. (Norinaga, 2010, p. 65)

The educational power of literature does not consist of an allegorical message toward Buddhist or Confucian moral lessons. Rather, it cultivates the rich world of human feeling. In this context, it is astonishing to hear the following words of Norinaga on Confucius.

If Confucius had read this tale [*The Tale of Genji*], he would have esteemed it more highly than the Three Hundred Poems and would have ranked it equal with the Six Scriptures. (Norinaga, 2010, p. 176)

Even though Norinaga severely criticized the later development of Confucianism, he esteemed Confucius as a man who had a rich understanding of human feelings. Norinaga probably acquired this understanding of Confucius through his interpretation of the *Analects*, 11, 26, the longest passage in the entire book, in which Confucius approved the words of Zengxi who said: “At the end of spring, with the spring clothes having already been finished, I would like, in the company of five or six young men and six or seven children, to cleanse ourselves in the Yi River, to revel in the cool breezes at the Altar for Rain, and then return home singing”(Kobayashi, 2002, pp. 57-64; Sagara, 2011, chap. 1).

2. Broadening of Horizons

The brief survey above of the positions of Salutati and Norinaga concerning the educational role of literature has prepared the way to compare the two views. The comparison here does not consist of listing a table of differences and classifying them. Rather, its intention is to understand the historical horizons of each position.

2.1 Salutati and the Spell of Allegory

Salutati’s approach is rationalistic. He regards a poet as a kind of super-philosopher, a man of universal knowledge. Behind the attractive veil of wordplay, Greek and Roman poetry contains deep wisdom of the ancients in the form of allegory. Reading poetry is, therefore, a highly intellectual operation.

This rationalistic approach was prompted by the tradition of Platonism. Plato launched a series of criticism against poetry in the *Ion*, the *Apology*, and, above all, *The Republic*. His main target was Homer, but his criticism also targeted at the tragic poets. The main accusation was centered on a lack of knowledge and wrong moral messages. In Platonic writings, we witness the final stage of Greek *paideia*, in which the age-old authority of poets as teachers is finally and decisively replaced by philosophers (Socrates and Plato). Against this strong current, the post-Platonic defenders of poetry had to show that poetry such as Homeric epics contains deep philosophical wisdom in the form of allegory. This technique of allegorical interpretation was then applied to the interpretation of some passages in the Bible. St. Basil, an influential Church father of the fourth century, defended the reading of pagan poets by a Christian youth along these lines in a letter. This letter, translated into Latin by Leonardo Bruni, enjoyed great popularity in the Renaissance (Kristeller, 1965, 39-40).

Salutati inherits this tradition. For him, both ancient poetry and the Bible are rich sources of philosophical allegories. However, Salutati is not just one of many inheritors of the tradition. As one of the most influential men of culture in the early Renaissance, he prepared the way for new stages in history.

On one hand, this led to the idea of the ancient true wisdom dispersed in ancient poetry before Plato and Aristotle. This idea was reinforced by Marsilio Ficino’s translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, a book containing seventeen Greek treatises of the legendary sage, Hermes Trismegistos, who supposedly lived before Plato and Moses (Yates, 1964). For some followers of humanism, the ancient poetry became a second Bible, more allegorical and entertaining but still containing important messages. This idea had further influence on Vico and Herder (Berlin, 1976).

The parallel with ancient poetry, on the other hand, stimulated the philological interpretation of the Bible. Instead of faithfully (or blindly) following the interpretation of the Church, the parallelism with poetry inspired the readers of humanistic sympathy to read the Bible as a text no different from ancient poetry. The birth of modern hermeneutics owes much to this new trend of Biblical interpretation (Gadamer, 1975, pp. 162-165).

Nevertheless, despite its important role in history, Salutati's defense of poetry seems outmoded and even bewildering due to its insistence on allegory. Certainly, the heyday of allegory is past. We do not interpret modern novels like *Madame Bovary* as allegory. Realism has superseded allegory (Watt, 2015, chap. 1).

However, it is another question whether realism and other trends of modern thought have completely replaced allegory. Even though we do not take works of art as allegories of Stoic virtues or Christian teachings, we are often inclined to read some sort of social or political message in them. Thus, we tend to read modern novels as accusations of social injustice, such as discrimination against women or child labor. A non-allegorical work of art is often interpreted as a message to open our eyes to a corner of our world that usually remains unnoticed. In short, we still tend to read these works as messages of reality that deserve attention. The focus has shifted from metaphysical ideas to non-metaphysical persons and things. But the message character of arts, which requires interpretation, remains, as Susan Sontag points out in her illuminating essay "Against Interpretation" (Sontag, 2013). This character takes many forms, from crude propaganda to the aesthetics that bestows on beauty the educative role of leading the mind from the sensual to the moral. Allegory has not died. It has been transformed into subtler forms.

2.2 Norinaga and the Heritage of Waka Poetry

Compared with Salutati, Norinaga's defense of *The Tale of Genji* and his appreciation of *mono no aware* seems to swing to the opposite extreme. Norinaga does not require from poets or novelists the knowledge of philosophy. He does not argue that *The Tale of Genji* contains *rikugei*, the Japanese equivalent of liberal arts. Instead, he focuses on sensitivity. This may give the impression that Norinaga is an anti-intellectual who prefers emotion to intellectual calculus. In this line of interpretation, his thought may look like a Japanese version of Sturm und Drang and Romanticism.

However, we should beware of such easy labelling. In fact, the categories like "thought" versus "feeling" are Western. The use of this dichotomy would constrain our interpretation within the horizon of Western philosophy (Kobayashi, 2002, p. 152).

This also applies to the distinction between the ethical and the aesthetical. Even though the Greek word *kalon* originally combined the good and the beautiful, the development of Western ethics after Stoicism was mainly concentrated on the good that took the form of duties. Observance of duties constituted the main bulk of ethics. Through the discovery and proliferation of the writings of Cicero and Seneca, Stoicism gained great popularity after the Renaissance and exerted great influence on modern ethical thought (MacIntyre, 2007). Its most famous version is Kantian ethics. To accommodate the neglected beauty, modern philosophy invented a new discipline, aesthetics. This produced the gap between the good and the beautiful. Ultimately, the ethical and the aesthetical became either/or options (Kierkegaard, 1971).

Norinaga's thoughts offer us an alternative understanding of the ethical, which is more

comprehensive than its counterpart in the Western tradition. Norinaga had to fight his own battle against the Confucian and Buddhist scholars whose moral understanding was too narrow to appreciate *The Tale of Genji*. However, Norinaga believed firmly that *The Tale of Genji* was not unethical or anti-ethical. He insisted that Confucius would have appreciated it if he had read it. For Norinaga, Confucius was not a severe teacher of duties but a humane figure who understood subtle human feelings. This interpretation of Confucius opens the way to conceive ethics in a wider perspective, which, interestingly, can be supported by the initial meaning of the Greek word *ethos*.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle coined the term, ethics (*ethike*) from the common Greek word *ethos*, which meant habit or custom. According to Aristotle, moral virtues such as courage and temperance were acquired through a process of habituation starting in the early childhood. This habituation preceded theoretical understanding and was aimed at human desires and passions. A virtuous person was a person who has learned to control desires and passions in proper measure. It is important to remember that Aristotelian virtues included a wide spectrum of social relationships. A sense of humor, for example, is among them. The Aristotelian good person is not devoid of feeling or pathos (Nussbaum, 1992, chap. 1). He is not a Stoic sage who does not bewail the death of his children. The absence of pathos, *apatheia*, is the Stoic ideal. For Aristotle, a good person knows the proper measure of pathos. Even excessive lamentation may be appropriate in the proper time and at the proper place. In the same spirit, Aristotle affirmed Greek tragedies that aroused fear and pity among audiences. This is even more remarkable when we remember that his teacher, Plato, launched a whole-sale condemnation of tragedy in *The Republic*.

However, in the course of history, the original Aristotelian understanding of ethics was replaced by a more severe model, which was prepared by Plato and reinforced by Stoicism.

Norinaga's image of Confucius as a reader of *The Tale of Genji*, backed by his theory of *mono no aware*, can breathe new life into the narrow post-Stoic understanding of ethics. It can also deepen and widen the Aristotelian understanding of ethics.

The treatment of pathos in Aristotelian ethics has, *pace* Nussbaum (Nussbaum, 1992, chap. 1), the following limitations. First, even though Aristotle included pathos as a necessary element of ethics, his intention was aimed at moderation or even suppression of pathos. This is because, according to Aristotle, human nature is inclined to be excessive (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 2, chap. 9). Second, the types of pathos Aristotle examines in ethics are limited, because Aristotelian virtues are the civic virtues of a Greek polis. The pathos mainly discussed are those such as fear (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 3, chap. 6-9), lust (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 3, chap. 10-12), and greed (*Nicomachean Ethics*, book 4, chap. 1-2), which must be controlled for the peaceful coexistence of citizens. These are pathos that, left uncontrolled, can become excessive and harmful. The third point relates to the second. The pathos known to Aristotle or to Greek philosophy in general only concerns human relationships. Nature is completely left aside. This indifference to natural beauty such as scenery left a deep influence on Western philosophy and arts of later ages.

In sharp contrast to Aristotle, Norinaga's theory of *mono no aware* concerns human feeling in a deeper and wider range. First, his interest is not control but cultivation and deepening of feeling. Deepening does not mean excess but understanding of different shades of feeling. A person who understands *mono no aware* does not need to be in passionate love, but must understand (or at least be able to imagine vividly) passionate love with its joy and

misery, and can feel sympathy or compassion toward it. Thus, he does not condemn the victim of such feelings as unvirtuous, weak, or even immoral. Second, unlike Aristotelian ethics, *mono no aware* does not concern feelings such as anger, lust, and greed. Its main concern is love with different shadings. Basic Buddhist feelings of compassion and pity also play an important role. Third, *mono no aware* is not limited to human relationships. The feeling toward various aspects of nature expressed in seasons is fundamental. This sense is entirely absent in Greek philosophy.

These characteristics of *mono no aware* are deeply connected with the tradition of waka poetry, as the first explanation of this word in Norinaga's writings is found in his treatise of waka, the *Ishinokami Sasamegoto*.

Waka, lyric poetry consisting of 31 syllables, is the most representative type of Japanese poetry. In the Heian period (793-1192), waka obtained great popularity in the imperial court. Murasaki Shikibu, the female author of *The Tale of Genji*, was a well-known waka poet raised in the waka tradition. *The Tale of Genji* contains a great number of waka poems, which do not simply add flavor to adorn the novel. *The Tale of Ise*, one of the earliest novels preceding *The Tale of Genji*, suggests that the genre of story (*monogatari*) originally developed out of the preceding explanation (*kotobagaki*) of waka (*uta*). The short stories that constitute *The Tale of Ise* describe the occasion and the circumstances that gave birth to waka. *The Tale of Ise* is the oldest *uta-monogatari* (waka story) in Japan. The 54 stories (*jou*) that constitute *The Tale of Genji* are longer and more elaborate than the stories of *The Tale of Ise*. They seem to have obtained independent value and status as a novel. Nevertheless, *The Tale of Genji* is not like a plot-driven modern novel (Brooks, 2012). Compared with a modern novel, it is more lyrical and sentimental. This difference is due to its origins. In Europe, Aristotle in his *Poetics* (1450a) considered the plot (*muthos*), which he defines as an imitation of action, as "the heart and soul, as it were, of tragedy" (Ricoeur, 1983, pp. 66-104; Brooks, 2012, chap. 1). He asserts that "the poet should be a maker of his plots more than of his verses, insofar as he is a poet by virtue of his imitations and what he imitates is actions" (1451b; Aristotle, 1970, p. 34). The soul of *The Tale of Genji*, on the other hand, is in waka. No wonder, then, that Norinaga sometimes called it an *uta monogatari* (Norinaga, 2010, p. 62, 63, 97; Kobayashi, 2002, p. 187).

This is why *The Tale of Genji* long served as the basic text for learning waka. It contains numerous descriptions of occasions that gave birth to waka, such as festivals, appreciation of multifarious aspects of seasons, and different phases of love. The careful reader can learn from it how to behave appropriately on each occasion, what kind of waka to compose, and, last but not least, the proper feeling required by natural and social circumstances. In short, this reader can learn *mono no aware*.

Concluding Remarks

The examination of Salutati and Norinaga brings to light the difference of traditions as background of each view. Plato's attack on poetry as ignorant of its contents, which was later resumed by Scholastic theologians, placed knowledge as the main theme of controversy. As a result, Salutati's defense of poetry had to focus on its intellectual and philosophical aspects. Norinaga, on the contrary, was backed by the age-old and well-recognized tradition of

waka. Even though he was aware of the criticism of *The Tale of Genji* from Confucianism and Buddhism, he could put aside this criticism as irrelevant by interpreting the novel within the tradition of waka.

Compared with the plethora of literary theories today, both Salutati and Norinaga may seem rudimentary. Certainly, they lack the sophistication of today's literary theories, most of which relate to "isms" (Fry, 2012). However, without their courageous attempt to defend the value of literature, it might not have obtained recognition in education. Contemporary literary theories must acknowledge a debt to them. Salutati and Norinaga testify that the recognition of the educational significance of literature is not a given fact, but something that must be fought for.

*Translations of Salutati and Norinaga, when not specified, are the author's.

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