

March 2015

## Seeing And Believing: A Critical Study of Kobayashi Hideo's Watakushi no Jinseikan

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### Recommended Citation

Morikawa, Saki, "Seeing And Believing: A Critical Study of Kobayashi Hideo's Watakushi no Jinseikan" (2015). *Masters Theses*. 161.  
<https://doi.org/10.7275/6465808> [https://scholarworks.umass.edu/masters\\_theses\\_2/161](https://scholarworks.umass.edu/masters_theses_2/161)

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SEEING AND BELIEVING:  
A CRITICAL STUDY OF KOBAYASHI HIDEO'S *WATAKUSHI NO JINSEIKAN*

A Thesis Presented

by

SAKI MORIKAWA

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

February 2015

Asian Languages and Literatures

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## DEDICATION

To my mentor, Mutsuko Ueda.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my committee members who were thoughtful and supportive throughout the entire process. My heartfelt thank you to my advisor, Stephen M. Forrest, who was always patient with the slow progress of my writing and encouraged me countless times when things became difficult. His selfless dedication to my thesis will forever be appreciated. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Doris G. Bargen and Chisato Kitagawa for their helpful comments and for always being understanding toward what I would like to express in my thesis.

I want to thank my friend, Devin T. Recchio for reading Miyamoto Musashi's *The Book of Five Rings* in Japanese with me. Regardless of my inability to fully analyze the text, Devin was always thoughtful enough to help me understand the heart of Musashi's thought. I will never forget the way Devin would think with all his mind and strength.

I wish to show my utmost appreciation to my mentor, Mutsuko Ueda. Without her, I would never have encountered and appreciated the works of Kobayashi Hideo. She is the one who has opened my eye to literature and taught me how to think and see things. During my two months of living in Tokyo this summer, Mrs. Ueda kindly and tirelessly spent countless hours on reading the writings of Kobayashi's, Bergson's and Musashi's for me and on discussing and correcting my thesis outline. I cannot express enough gratitude for her cordial care.

## ABSTRACT

SEEING AND BELIEVING:

A CRITICAL STUDY OF KOBAYASHI HIDEO'S *WATAKUSHI NO JINSEIKAN*

FEBRUARY 2015

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What do we mean by “seeing”? Although we may see the same object in front of us, we each consciously or unconsciously select what we wish to see, eliminating information we find unnecessary. An artist or poet can see in even a tiny flower, which others barely notice, a wealth of colors or countless words. How then do our own eyes and those of others differ?

This thesis aims to explore how the act of seeing shapes one's life and influences it through a consideration of the works of Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902-1983), a literary critic in modern Japan. In 1949 Kobayashi published a long essay entitled “Watakushi no jinseikan” 私の人生観 (My View of Life), originally given as a speech in 1948 when he was forty-six years old. In this work Kobayashi analyzes the word *kan* 観 (vision) with reference to more than forty historical figures from both the West and the East. The thesis selects for discussion two of these in particular, namely Miyamoto Musashi 宮本武蔵(1584-1645), a Japanese warrior of the early Edo era, and Henri

Bergson (1859-1941), a major French philosopher of the twentieth century upon whom Kobayashi places special significance.

While the primary focus is on interpreting this speech of Kobayashi's, the thesis also discusses his earlier and later works in order to show the various transitions his philosophy went through over the course of his long career. The strong belief to which Kobayashi held on throughout his life as a literary critic is that the only way to see the essence of any object is to reject all rational and analytical interpretation and instead to unite one's self with the objects: this was the ultimate approach that Kobayashi adopted in order to understand the word *kan*. This thesis finally addresses the question of whether this vision enabled Kobayashi to achieve his potential as a critic and as an individual.



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## INTRODUCTION

I say one must be a *seer*, make oneself a *seer*.

The Poet makes himself a *seer* by a long, gigantic, and rational *derangement of all the senses*. All the forms of love, suffering, and madness. He searches himself. He exhausts all poisons in him and keeps only their quintessences. Unspeakable torture where he needs all his faith, all his superhuman strength, where he becomes, among all men the great patient, the great criminal, the one accursed --and the supreme Scholar!

from the "Letter of the Seer" by Arthur Rimbaud<sup>1</sup>

The act of seeing is the same as seeing oneself. Consciously or unconsciously, the viewer selects what to see according to past experiences, preferences, and his or her own background by eliminating information deemed unnecessary. Seeing is thus a very personal process. As a single rose can present certain people with innumerable features and a uniqueness that urges them to create a verse or to reproduce its color on a canvas, there are degrees in seeing where objects effectively change their appearance depending on their seer. It seems strange, however, that seeing generates these differences among people when it is such a simple function of a body. How could it be possible for one who sees through his own eyes to understand the viewpoint of others without being affected by his self? How might he be liberated from this boundary?

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<sup>1</sup> *Letter of the Seer (Lettre du Voyant* in French) is a letter that poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) wrote to his friend Paul Demeny in 1871. Translation by Wallace Fowlie from his bilingual edition: Arthur Rimbaud, *Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans., intro. and notes Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966) p. 307. The original French text is included in the Appendix.

The focus in this master's thesis is the idea of seeing and how each person's viewpoint affects and shapes his life. The figure I have chosen to analyze concerning this theme is Kobayashi Hideo 小林秀雄 (1902-1983), who is often described as the forefather of literary criticism in modern Japan. Kobayashi was born and grew up in Tokyo, strongly influenced by the West; he majored in French literature at Tokyo Imperial University and started publishing various translations and articles in journals while still a student there. His first major work as a literary critic was titled "Samazama naru ishō" 様々なる意匠 ("Various designs," 1929) and with the admiration of his readers, Kobayashi made his debut in the literary world at the age of twenty-seven. What made Kobayashi unique among other critics during his time was not only his distinctive use of words and keen intelligence, but the diversity of his interests, ranging from classical to modern and from literature to all forms of art both in the West and in the East; this was a great asset for his readers to gain new perspectives and knowledge. In addition, Kobayashi always had an earnest wish to fully grasp the objects that he admired and respected, and he would willingly take pains to reach his aim. This enabled Kobayashi to be a writer who was capable of breathing life into historical figures and depicting them as if they were directly addressing their thoughts to readers. However difficult the situations in his life, Kobayashi was sustained by always being close to objects to which he could dedicate himself, and this surely seems to have been a kind of salvation for him.

In terms of researches on Kobayashi done outside Japan, there is only a limited number of books and articles available. One of the earliest English articles on him was published by Edward Seidensticker in 1983, the year Kobayashi passed away. The way in which Seidensticker describes and evaluates Kobayashi clearly shows his deep

appreciation toward this critic. Seidensticker writes, “the death of Kobayashi might as well be taken as marking the end of an era. . .Kobayashi is usually called a literary critic, though, as with Edmund Wilson, his writings went far beyond literature.”<sup>2</sup>

Paul Anderer’s book titled *Literature of the Lost Home: Kobayashi Hideo-Literary Criticism, 1924-1939* is the first English translations of some of the early writings of Kobayashi and offers a good introduction of the essential thought of Kobayashi to those who are not familiar with him. In his introductory essay, Anderer convinces his English readers that “what is modern about Japanese literature is as vividly conveyed by its criticism as by any experimental poem, novel, or play.”<sup>3</sup> Also, Kobayashi can be of consequence in terms of his impartial knowledge of thought both in the West and the East, which provides how modern criticism in Japan was formed.

The most recent English book with extensive research on Kobayashi is of James Dorsey’s. Closely relating the historical background, especially the wartime, to Kobayashi’s thought, Dorsey carefully analyzes and explains the unique characteristics of Kobayashi focusing on his aesthetics. Kobayashi’s thought is often times described as non-rational but intuitive. The nature of his criticism is not to accumulate logic to support his argument but to make a sudden leap to his conclusion, which those who are used to logical thinking find hard to follow. In this sense, Dorsey’s book plays a significant role in providing a through explanation of Kobayashi at great length. Although major English studies on Kobayashi are only limited, there should be more ways to learn about him and to appreciate his thought even outside Japan. Expressing things that cannot be verbalized is Kobayashi’s essence in criticism. Appreciating both the value of thoroughly expressing

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<sup>2</sup> Seidensticker 1983, p. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Anderer 1995, p. 12.

in words and of expressing with minimum words must be the key to cross over the boundary between the West and the East.

### **Brief Background of the Speech “*Watakushi no jinseikan*”**

It was in November of 1948, three years after the end of the World War II, that Kobayashi delivered a speech titled “*Watakushi no jinseikan*” 私の人生観 (which may be translated as “My View of Life”) under the sponsorship by the Shin Ōsaka Newspaper. This speech was published a year later, after Kobayashi had thoroughly revised it. To briefly touch on Kobayashi’s personal affairs as the background to the speech, he had lost his beloved mother in 1946 and he still felt immense sorrow, as he shows in recalling the time in a later essay titled *Kansō* 感想 ("Reflections" 1958). He writes:

My mother died the year after the war ended. Her death was extremely painful to me. I feel that compared to this the momentous events of the war only upset my body and never swayed my heart. While I was greatly disturbed by the Japan-China war when serving as a war correspondent, I stubbornly began to avert my eyes from the war as it progressed. I was writing *Saigyō*<sup>4</sup> and *Sanetomo*<sup>5</sup> at that time. I began to write *Mozart*<sup>6</sup>, which was first published after the war, in Nanking during the war. It was out of my extremely natural and earnest feeling that I wrote “Dedicated to the spirit of my mother” when *Mozart* became a book. Because I cherished only my sorrow, any issues concerning postwar journalism never attracted my interest.<sup>7</sup>

It seems crucial to argue that Kobayashi’s attitude as a critic is deeply founded on his relationship with his mother. What makes Kobayashi say he cherished only his sorrow and what effect did the loss of his mother have on him? This will be further discussed below.

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<sup>4</sup> “西行” published in *Bungakukai* 文學界, 1942.

<sup>5</sup> “実朝” published in *Bungakukai* 文學界, 1943.

<sup>6</sup> “モオツアルト” published in *Sōgen* 創元, 1946. Later published as in book form (*Sōgensha*, 1947).

<sup>7</sup> Kobayashi 2005a, p.11. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. The Japanese texts of such translations are included in the Appendix.

In addition to the influence the loss of his mother had on him, the significance of this speech for Kobayashi can be considered in several ways. One is that it was written after the war at a time when Kobayashi was being bitterly criticized for his rather positive acceptance of the war; this had made him somewhat isolated from society. Thus, this speech might have been the manifestation of what he wished his audience to understand about him, or might even have been an attempt to justify his attitude toward the war, while also identifying problems that Japan as a defeated nation would have to go through in the future. Another significant fact is that this speech comes at the middle point of Kobayashi's career as a critic: therefore it can provide readers both as the culmination of his thought from his early years and as a prospective statement of his later work.

### **Kobayashi's Definition of *Kan***

The main theme that Kobayashi repeatedly explores throughout the speech with reference to more than forty historical figures from the West and the East is the significance of the word *kan* 観, as in the *jinseikan* 人生観 of his essay's title. According to Kobayashi, if there is any English equivalent to *kan*, it would be the word "vision." Although *kan* literally means to see things, it does not indicate the mere physiological work of eyes as in for example, seeing an object placed in front of him. What implications, then, does the word have? The word itself is an inconspicuous part of everyday language usage among Japanese people but the idea behind the word does not seem to have fully been understood and appreciated. According to Kobayashi, *kan* carries a particular nuance for Japanese people upon whom Buddhism has exercised a great influence since its introduction many centuries ago. As suggested in the Buddhist devotional method called *Kanpō* 観法, where one keeps picturing Buddha in his heart

until he actually “sees” Buddha, *kan* is a process or a state that can only be attained by the accumulated practice of both mind and body and also by the unification of seeing and thinking. Seemingly mystical, the ultimate state of having acquired this vision is unexplainable and incommunicable. Kobayashi attempts to present his interpretation of the word as accurately as possible. The key notion I would like to propose in explaining Kobayashi’s *kan* is the “eyes that intuitively grasp the whole of any existence.” This is not only the theme of this speech but also an approach toward writing about any objects that Kobayashi pursued throughout his career, even down to his *Motoori Norinaga* 本居宣長 of 1977-82--his monumental last great work as a critic.<sup>8</sup>

### **My Purpose and Hypothesis in This Thesis**

By analyzing Kobayashi’s speech focused on the idea of *kan*, I attempt to show this thesis that one can gain an expanded picture by shifting or expanding his fixed viewpoint, and thus be liberated from the limits of the self. It is also my intention to clearly depict the transitional periods that Kobayashi went through during the middle of his career as a critic. This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter 1 discusses the general background of Kobayashi as a critic and the characteristics of his recurring themes and interests from his early career. In chapters 2 and 3, I select for close attention three historical figures, Saigyō 西行 (1118-90), a poet and a monk from the late Heian to the early Kamakura period, Miyamoto Musashi 宮本武蔵 (1584-1645), a swordsman of

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<sup>8</sup> Motoori Norinaga 本居宣長 (1730-1801) was a scholar of National Learning, *Kokugaku* 国学 in the mid-Edo period. His most important works include *Kojiki den* 古事記伝, a detailed commentary on *Kojiki* 古事記, the oldest extant chronicle in Japan, and his volumes of annotation and commentary on *The Tale of Genji*. Kobayashi’s study of Motoori was the product of study begun in the 1960s, and will be discussed below.



legendary skill in the seventeenth century, and Henri Bergson (1859-1941), one of the most influential French philosophers of the twentieth century. Kobayashi places special emphasis on these three in his speech and I wish to clarify how he regards *kan* from the way he presents them. Chapter 4 is about how Kobayashi's later works have been evaluated by other scholars and critics. The focus in this chapter is on Kobayashi's last work, *Motoori Norinaga*, whose reputation, interestingly enough, is clearly divided in contrast to his early works, which gained instant acclaim. Although I will present various evaluations of Kobayashi, my main focus will be on the major critic, Yoshimoto Takaaki 吉本隆明 (1924-2012). Although Yoshimoto used to be an avid reader of Kobayashi up to a certain point, he ended up taking a different direction from Kobayashi. This is because he concludes that Kobayashi's criticism is lacking something essential. Thus, in terms of understanding and appreciating the strengths and weak points in Kobayashi's critical thinking, Yoshimoto will provide readers with good insight and a different perspective. By comparing those two critics, I am hoping that the unique features of Kobayashi's thought will be demonstrated more clearly.

My hypothesis in this thesis is that, despite the several transitional periods that Kobayashi went through, he maintained a firm conviction throughout his career that the only way to fully appreciate any object is to reject the rational and analytical work of mind and place sole reliance on one's sensibility; however, this did not consequently afford him with a more expanded or versatile viewpoint as a critic. In parallel to this, I would like to discuss what the notions of self and other meant to Kobayashi. In contrast to his early years when his sole preoccupation and struggle was about his *jiishiki* 自意識 (self-consciousness), Kobayashi in his late years often used the word *mushi* 無私

(selflessness), as, for example, in this sentence from *Motoori Norinaga*: “If we approach writings in an attitude of unconditional selflessness, then they come forward and speak their clear truths to everyone.”<sup>9</sup> How did this transition occur inside Kobayashi? As mentioned above, the act of seeing is of its nature subjected to one’s self. I believe that Kobayashi’s *kan* in his speech must have a close relation to this issue. Although the main focus in this thesis is on *kan*, it is my intention also to touch on Kobayashi’s early and later career as well to create a coherent picture of Kobayashi’s transitions in his thoughts.

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<sup>9</sup> Kobayashi 2004c, p. 40, as cited in Seidensticker 1983, p. 272.

## CHAPTER I

### EARLIER VISION AS A LITERARY CRITIC AND TRANSITION TO “WATAKUSHI NO JINSEIKAN”

#### **Kobayashi as a Forefather of Modern Literary Criticism**

It seems necessary first to discuss why Kobayashi is called the first literary critic in modern Japan in spite of the fact that there were supposedly many critics before and even in the same period as he. The first thing that needs to be pointed out is that “writing criticism on literature including essays and controversies used to be mainly a novelists’ job before Kobayashi, who was the first person conscious of himself as a literary critic, appeared in the beginning of the Shōwa Period.”<sup>10</sup> The dawn of modern literature in Japan was brought about by importing literature from Europe in the Meiji period. While the sudden transition into modernization was forced upon Japanese people, it was inevitable for them to have imitated the western literature as a standard and the question of what modern literature is was expected to be given some answer in a short period of time. Thus, the early form of modern literature in Japan was mainly criticism that aimed at introducing the idea of European literature, which then led novelists to apply the European literary techniques and to establish them in their own works in Japanese. Representatives of this trend were Tsubouchi Shōyō 坪内逍遙 (1859-1935), who introduced Shakespeare, Futabatei Shimei 二葉亭四迷 (1864-1909), who introduced Turgenev and Tayama Katai 田山花袋 (1871-1930), who introduced Maupassant to a Japanese audience. This is the general background of the literary world before Kobayashi. A recent scholar, Tanaka Kazuo 田中和生 (1974-), holds that “any works in modern

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<sup>10</sup> Tanaka 2008, p.2.

Japanese literature were written for the purpose of answering the question ‘what is literature?’ whose answer could be found in European literature...However, it was in Kobayashi’s literary criticism that questions without answers were first posited as a literary work.”<sup>11</sup> This suggests that Kobayashi was the critic who cut his way through the modern literature for himself without seeking any answer in the immensely influential European literature.

Since his winning the second prize in an essay contest sponsored by a magazine called *Kaizō* 改造, Kobayashi’s name started to be known widely. Kawabata Yasunari 川端康成 (1899-1972), who was not only a novelist but also a literary critic, describes Kobayashi as “one of the most prominent critics.”<sup>12</sup> This clearly suggests that a transitional period in the literary world was brought about by the appearance of Kobayashi. Scholars have presented various opinions regarding this matter but one of the most significant elements Kobayashi had introduced into literary criticism was the idea of self-consciousness. Etō Jun 江藤淳 (1933-1999), a critic in the later generation gives a concise and persuasive analysis of it. He argues, “It is not that there were no critics before Kobayashi. But there were no critics conscious of themselves as critics before him. This is only to say that for Kobayashi, self-consciousness meant being conscious of the act of criticism as a problem of his very existence.”<sup>13</sup> The word “self-consciousness” is a word Kobayashi himself had repeatedly used in his early criticism as represented in his “Samazama naru ishō.” Acknowledging the captivating literary criticism of Charles Baudelaire’s, Kobayashi argues, “Some have tried variously to separate criticism and

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<sup>11</sup> Tanaka 2008, p.10.

<sup>12</sup> Kawabata 1982, p.421.

<sup>13</sup> Etō 1965, p.7 (trans. Anderer)

self-consciousness. But the magical power of Baudelaire's criticism derives from his clear awareness that to write criticism is to make oneself conscious. To say that the subject of criticism is the self and the other is to say that there is but a single subject, not two." <sup>14</sup> To Kobayashi, criticism can never be created without self-consciousness because, since what one sees represents himself, criticism also inevitably represents the person himself. Also, the idea of self and the other being merged into one subject has a significant relation to the Kobayashi's notion about his mother, which will be discussed later.

Questions like "what is self?" or "What is self-consciousness and how do we escape from being at a loss in it?" often occupy some people's mind. Kobayashi's ceaseless struggle and urge in understanding his self must have appealed to many people who had consciously or vaguely suffered from the same problem in their youth and he was virtually the only critic who genuinely tried to face this issue and thoroughly to develop his answers. Because all the questions Kobayashi had posited have a deep root in himself and in his life, he had never ceased to think about them even after he felt to have drawn some conclusions. Rather, those conclusions had provided him with new questions. Thus, it was sufficient for Kobayashi to posit himself in a dialogue with himself. The process of asking questions, submitting arguments and negating them was always Kobayashi's way to create his new self.

But, this struggle of Kobayashi's creates the question of why Kobayashi is deeply attached to the notion of self-consciousness. Actually feeling something and describing it in a paper are completely different things. The reason is very simple. Kobayashi himself had to suffer from being caught in his self-consciousness. Kobayashi writes in his self-

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<sup>14</sup> Kobayashi 2002a, pp.137-138.

autobiography titled “X eno tegami” Xへの手紙 “Letter to X” that “the only thing I am certain of is my own pain.”<sup>15</sup> When his self-consciousness perceived the acute pain from reality, he would dare to look through the interior of himself and if pain were the emotional element which makes one conscious of himself most, this certain pain must have given Kobayashi the reason for his being.

### **Mother’s Eye**

When under adverse circumstances, one seeks help. It was his mother’s eye that Kobayashi wished to be cast upon most when he was tormented by his own eye affected by his self-consciousness and others’ critical eye toward him. In relation to the theme of seeing in this thesis, I would like to introduce some passages from Kobayashi’s early time that describe his thought about this particular eye which eventually becomes his ultimate scholarly approach as a critic. Kobayashi writes:

They say that ‘Parents are the best judges of their child.’...I believe that the one who understands me most is my mother because she loves me most. Because of that, she does not need to analyze my personality and never grieves that she cannot predict how I behave.<sup>16</sup>

It is extremely rare to encounter the genial eye. Only this eye scares me because I cannot know what it is seeing. Only this eye is beautiful because it hides a secret in it. This is the eye most high-spirited and most attentive. However difficult it is to possess this eye, why can people not say positively what kind of person I am? Why can they not even have such a courage to do that? ... No one can surpass the understanding of my mother about me. Despite my incomprehensible remarks, she never loses the eye to see who I really am.<sup>17</sup>

To Kobayashi, love that his mother gives him surpasses any analysis and it is the only way to understand objects directly and to perceive them on the whole. Also, only a mother possesses the eye to sympathize with her child wholly. This mother’s eye seems

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<sup>15</sup> Kobayashi 2003a, p.67.

<sup>16</sup> Kobayashi 2002b, p.32.

<sup>17</sup> Kobayashi 2003a, p.67.

an important term to understand what Kobayashi thinks about *kan* in his speech. How various the way of expressing their love may be, there should not be many parents who intentionally keep a distance from their child in order to maintain an objective and critical eye toward them. What did this mean to Kobayashi who had always admired this particular eye? Through his earlier works to his last one, he had never abandoned this firm belief that the only way to understand any matter is not to keep a distance from it but to immerse himself into it to the extent that the distinction between him and the matter disappeared. This poses the question for his readers of whether this method is in fact the best way for critics to evaluate things objectively. Can one see things well even under the circumstances that there is not an enough distance between them?

### **Limits of Pursuing Self-consciousness**

Longing for the warm eye to watch him, Kobayashi's pursuit of his self-consciousness did not cease. However, when one is fettered by this pursuit, he starts to feel suffocated being unable to find the exit to escape. No matter how thoroughly he tries to see himself, the picture only becomes faded and can never be attained. How does this happen? In *Tsumi to batsu ni tsuite II 罪と罰について II* "On *Crime and Punishment II*," Kobayashi seems to liken himself to the main character of the Feodor Dostoevsky (1821-81)'s famous novel, *Raskolnikov*.

There is an extreme desire in *Raskolnikov* to be himself without relying upon others. And his tenacious disposition in which he denies what is already established and given but to deal with everything by himself eventually makes him reject the necessity of others and confined in the world of his inner possibilities. He only becomes distraught when he learns that such a thing called a master does not even exist in this empty world where his ideas infinitely chase one another.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Kobayashi 2004a, p. 130.

The struggle to live in one's own world without others consequently exhausts both Raskolnikov and Kobayashi. Yoshimoto Takaaki regards this as a "self- distraction" or "a drama of distracted self-consciousness."<sup>19</sup> This means that in this drama, a person is forced to play both an actor and the audience who criticizes the former. This dual consciousness always bears the risk that one's analyzing himself, if it goes to the extreme, ends up demolishing himself. But, he never stops questioning whether his consciousness is truly pure enough to perceive his own experiences, any matter or existence as they are without any distortion or bias. What is certain for this person is only his direct experience attained through his consciousness. As the main theme of his debut work "Samazama naru ishō" is to question and doubt thoroughly all the established thoughts, ideals, logic and ideologies and to regard them as mere "designs," Kobayashi had wished to be faithful only to his consciousness and sensibility because they were the last things he could doubt. This attitude of seeking for the conviction and the standard of any matter only in his inner awareness and intuition had never been seen in the world of literary criticism before Kobayashi.

However, as the pursuit of one's self demands an endless cycle of mind, Kobayashi starts to realize its limit in the end. As he writes, "I am eagerly tolerating something but I never know what that is. I am paying an extreme attention to something but do not know toward what."<sup>20</sup> This means that it was inevitable for Kobayashi to stray in the empty space where there is no actual reality but his self is only being excessively exposed and demolished. This led Kobayashi to resign himself to the attachment to his

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<sup>19</sup> Yoshimoto, Aeba 1976, p.23.

<sup>20</sup> Kobayashi 2003a, p.67.



self-consciousness and to adopt a different method as a literary critic, which is where his criticism showed a new style.

### **Transition in Vision- *Dostoevsky no seikatsu* ドストエフスキーの生活**

It was in 1935 when Kobayashi published a serial study titled *Dostoevsky no seikatsu* ドストエフスキーの生活 *A Life of Dostoevsky* in a magazine, which some critics have pointed out is a turning point of Kobayashi as a literary critic. This is the period when he seems to have abandoned the idea of writing criticism through self-consciousness and also the obstinate pursuit of clarifying what the self is. There are several passages in which Kobayashi expresses his determination to set out to write on this great Russian writer of the nineteenth century. For example, in his essay titled “Shishin” 私信 “A Private Letter,” Kobayashi says:

I have chosen Dostoevsky as a material for my creative criticism for I thought there is no writer in the history of modern literature who holds such rich mysteries as he does. I never intend to distort his figure nor have the capacity to do so. The more I read his novels, the more independent his figure starts to become from my subjective view. Then, I am no longer interested in my ability to write criticism, rather I feel such a thing disappears in me.<sup>21</sup>

Creative criticism in this case means to create the original image of Dostoevsky only unique to Kobayashi. This wish is similar to that of novelists who strive to reproduce various types of people in their stories. The content of *Dostoevsky* is very factual and focused on Dostoevsky’s biography in detail in order to recreate the concrete image of Dostoevsky’s life, which was full of chaotic and unpredictable events. This was the first attempt for Kobayashi in his career. Here, it is important to think about what element of Dostoevsky enabled Kobayashi to make this transition. In order to do this, his

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<sup>21</sup> Kobayashi 2003c, pp.41-42.

“Watakushi shōsetsu ron” 私小説論 “Discourse on Fiction of the Self,”<sup>22</sup> published in another magazine in the same year as Kobayashi began the serial publication of *Dostoevsky*, will be of help. In this criticism, Kobayashi compares André Gide (1869-1951), a French writer who was greatly valued in Japan for his autobiographical novels, to Dostoevsky. The way in which Kobayashi describes Gide suggests his admiration: “Gide sought to obliterate all else and restore faith in the self. He determined to create within his own nature a laboratory where he would discover how much skepticism, how much complexity, how much luxury and confusion, self-consciousness could endure.”<sup>23</sup> As discussed enough above, Kobayashi’s youth is characterized by the incessant struggle with his self, devouring French symbolists centering around Baudelaire and Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) but what it only taught him in the end is that even with this struggle, there still lies an unpredictable element in the deep down of one’s consciousness, which surpasses the mere prediction that humans rely upon. Although this “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” can be considered as Kobayashi’s theory on Gide as well as on the controversial issue of the self in Japanese society, it also points out the undoubted limit of understanding the self as Gide had attempted. After discussing Gide, Kobayashi shifts his focus onto Dostoevsky, saying:

In Dostoevsky’s writing, we repeatedly encounter certain sudden or accidental movements of the passions or of ideas that strike us as being bizarre. We are struck this way because such things occur everywhere in real life, but not in popular fiction...And the foundation of his realism was a persistent loyalty to this bewildering reality. As a writer, Gide is more limited than Dostoevsky, yet he engages the same reality, perhaps more self-consciously, and struggles to render it in its purest shape, no scissor cuts applied to it...<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The Japanese “I-novel”, popular form of modern fiction since the Taishō period (1912-1926)

<sup>23</sup> Kobayashi 2003b, pp. 175-176. (trans. Anderer)

<sup>24</sup> Kobayashi 2003b, p. 182. (trans. Anderer)

It is obvious that Kobayashi's acclaim is on Dostoevsky rather than on Gide. The important point here is that Kobayashi saw Dostoevsky's insight in the accidental movements of the human mind and how he was faithful to this disordered reality in his novels. By reading Dostoevsky, Kobayashi learned that the self is immensely and infinitely deep, wide and hardly predictable where the cause of all human actions is possibly hidden in the unconsciousness. Like Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment* and many of other Dostoevsky's characters, the self no longer exists when they show an extreme egoism while bearing the extreme selflessness at the same time. It must have seemed to Kobayashi that the attempt of analyzing the self clearly by one's consciousness would never give him an answer about himself and this is where Kobayashi succeeded in shifting to Dostoevsky by reflecting on his former method and eventually abandoning his self in his criticism.

Another reason that enabled Kobayashi to make a transition is that, as Yoshimoto Takaaki points out, Dostoevsky as a person and his life were so complicated and tragic that "with his early method, Kobayashi could not have possibly transferred his self into Dostoevsky's novels, his experience of exile caused by his political ideology and his chaotic life."<sup>25</sup> Fortunately or unfortunately, the self-consciousness of Kobayashi's was not much useful in reproducing the figure of Dostoevsky. In addition, although there seems that both Dostoevsky and his characters suffer from their self-consciousness too, Yoshimoto claims the nature of it is completely different from that of Kobayashi's influenced by the West, in a sense that "Dostoevsky's sickness in his self-consciousness lies in the moral tragedy caused by his unfortunate childhood, never in the drama of

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<sup>25</sup> Yoshimoto 1983, p.111.

excessive pursuit of it.”<sup>26</sup> It is important to point out here that since Kobayashi, for the first time in his career, was awakened to face the figure with whom he could never compete, he could achieve a new style in criticism. It was when he gave up his former arm that a new path to him was brought about.

### **Kobayashi’s View toward World War II**

While Kobayashi was working on *A Life of Dostoevsky* from 1935 to 1939, Japan was steadily progressing along the path that led, starting with the so-called China Incident in 1937, to its entry into the eventual world war. Among the several works in which Kobayashi wrote about the war, a short essay titled “Sensō ni tsuite” 戦争について “On War” (1937) is often considered controversial and referred to in order to indicate Kobayashi’s support for the war by some intellectuals and scholars. He writes:

Should the time come to take up arms, I would happily do so and perhaps even die for my country. I can neither conceive of any other preparation for war nor feel there is any need to do so... Literature exists for peace, not for war. In peace a writer can entertain any amount of complexity, but in the vortex of war he can take but one stance. The battle must be won.<sup>27</sup>

This passage has been understood by some including Karatani Kōjin to indicate that Kobayashi was a nationalist who had actively engaged himself in the war effort and was probably affirmative about Japan’s act of invading the surrounding countries. But is this understanding valid? Are there alternative viewpoints? Would it be possible for us to have a more nuanced understanding of what Kobayashi wished to express?

In his book *Critical Aesthetics: Kobayashi Hideo, Modernity, and Wartime Japan*, James Dorsey, analyzing the relationship of literary figures to the imperialist state during

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<sup>26</sup> Yoshimoto 1983, p.111

<sup>27</sup> Kobayashi 2003d, pp. 13-14. (trans. Anderer)

the wartime, cites postwar critics who believed that “any support for Japan’s war effort could have been possible only through a betrayal of a literary subjectivity”<sup>28</sup> and notes that the “conviction that literature and the pursuit of war are incompatible runs through most of the essays produced during the short-lived investigation of writers’ involvement in the war effort.”<sup>29</sup> Yet Dorsey considers Kobayashi’s writings on the Japanese classics during Japan's war years to have been examples of resistance to the subjugation of literature to the war effort.<sup>30</sup> What Dorsey argues suggests the ultimate attitude that Kobayashi felt he had to take as a literary person. To Kobayashi, literature was not supposed to interfere in any political decisions by showing agreement or disagreement. Literature exists only for peace. If he is not needed as a literary person who pursues peace, the only attitude he could take was to observe and accept the situation as it was or to simply become a soldier by putting aside his vocation.

Some critics have pointed out that “Kobayashi regarded war as nature.”<sup>31</sup> Nature exists as it is and any meaning one tends to attach to life and death is merely a notion. Kobayashi would cast a skeptical eye toward all the logic that analyzed reality, which he believed could never be understood by mere human knowledge. As a consequence, it seems natural for Kobayashi to have been drawn to the idea of *mujō* 無常 “evanescence” that was widely thought about in the Japanese Middle Ages where political turbulence was rampant. In fact it was during Japan's war years that Kobayashi’s famous series of essays including “Mujō to iu koto” 無常という事 “On Evanescence” were published. Edward Seidensticker describes these essays as “lyrical in nature, not so much reasoned

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<sup>28</sup> Dorsey 2009, p.159.

<sup>29</sup> Dorsey 2009, p. 160.

<sup>30</sup> Dorsey 2009, p. 160.

<sup>31</sup> Karatani 1972, p.220.

and organized criticism as impression and intuitions, so tenuously linked that the inattentive reader may expect to be left quickly behind.”<sup>32</sup> It is true that the impression Kobayashi felt in appreciating the Japanese classics plays a significant role in the essays but unlike his earlier essays, these ones seem to reveal Kobayashi’s calm stoicism as he observed the war from a distance.

In “*Taema*” 当麻 (1946), which is his first work dealing with the Japanese classics during the postwar period, Kobayashi gives an account of his impression on seeing a performance of the Nō play *Taema* written by the Muromachi-era playwright Zeami 世阿弥 (1364-1444). Kobayashi writes, “How can a philosophy of human life and death take form with such purity and simplicity?... Historians are happy to label as a 'time of turbulence' this wholesome era, the Muromachi period, where the evanescence of this world and the eternity of one’s faith were never questioned.”<sup>33</sup> This sentence seems to suggest Kobayashi’s emphasis is on the people in the Muromachi period having never doubted the transience of their reality despite their lack of any alternative ideology offering immediate consolation. A similar idea can also be found in his “*Mujō to iu koto*” when he says “only that which denies explication and does not flinch before it can be beautiful... it is a philosophy lost sight of in our day, so flooded with explication.”<sup>34</sup> Kobayashi’s existing rejection of ideologies, interpretations, and analysis became all the more solid during the wartime period.

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<sup>32</sup> Seidensticker, 1983, p.271.

<sup>33</sup> Kobayashi 2003f, pp. 136-137.

<sup>34</sup> Kobayashi 2003g, p.144.

## CHAPTER II

### KOBAYASHI'S IDEA ABOUT *KAN* 観

“When words cease to exist, I find interesting”<sup>35</sup> is a line from a poem by Ōtomo no yakamochi 大伴家持 (718-785) from the *Manyōshū* 万葉集, the oldest poetry collection in Japan. Kobayashi refers to it in his speech. Any matter will show its true face when one reaches the point of being deprived of words to analyze it. It is the work of going beyond words and of having a direct interaction between spirit and the object. Being liberated from interpretations and perceiving the very life of each object was the beginning of attaining *kan* to Kobayashi. This chapter discusses Kobayashi's idea about *kan*, centering on Saigyō and Miyamoto Musashi.

#### Japanese Monks through *Kan*

Japanese people have been using the word *kan* since ancient times. Before Zen Buddhism was introduced into Japan by Eisai 栄西 (1141-1215) and Dōgen 道元 (1200-1253) during the Kamakura period (1185-1333), the Japanese used the term *shikan* 止観 for the act of calming one's mind down in order to attain *kan*. The history of *shikan* dates back to the Nara period (710-794) and it is said that a Chinese monk named Ganjin 鑑真 (688-763), who had lost his eyesight on a voyage to Japan, was the one who brought *shikan*.<sup>36</sup> Kobayashi mentions about the statue of Ganjin owned by the Tōshōdaiji temple in Nara, saying that “a deep impression that the seated figure gives us should be a proof

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<sup>35</sup> The original line is 言絶えてかくおもしろき. This is from a poem of Ōtomo no Yakamochi in the fourth volume of *Manyōshū*

<sup>36</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.140.

of our perceiving something important about *shikan*.”<sup>37</sup> The eyes of the figure are calmly closed, but it possesses great dignity as if it were seeing everything through. *Kan* is surely not a mere physiological work of eyes but as Kobayashi defines the word, it is the state of thinking and seeing merged into one.

### **Saigyō as a Self-searching Poet**

As a figure whose works were deeply influenced by *Kanpō* 観法<sup>38</sup> in literature, Kobayashi mentions about Saigyō, a monk and a poet in the late Heian to the early Kamakura period in his speech. Kobayashi quotes what is said to be a remark of Saigyō that Saigyō “would compose poems clearly in a different manner from the normal. The moon, flowers, birds, and the snow were merely fabrications, which is self-evident. Therefore, he had never thought of flowers when composing a poem on them, never thought of the moon when writing on them.”<sup>39</sup> This means that the visible objects or the ideas that define or depict any objects were not necessary for Saigyō. He saw things only in his heart and the physiological work of eye was not of use to him in composing poems.

In 1942, seven years before Kobayashi made his speech, he had published an essay titled “Saigyō” 西行. This will provide us with the essential thought of Kobayashi’s toward this poet. What element of Saigyō and his poems moved Kobayashi? What is important to point out first is that Kobayashi repeatedly describes Saigyō as a solitary poet, saying that “Saigyō had introduced the idea of human solitude into the world of poems and his themes were thoroughly on this.”<sup>40</sup> As for all the natural existence which

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<sup>37</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.140.

<sup>38</sup> *Kanpō* in a Buddhist thought is a method to see Buddha in one’s heart and to pray.

<sup>39</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.148.

<sup>40</sup> Kobayashi 2003h, p. 181.



Saigyō mentioned, Kobayashi argues that these were only the cause of having made Saigyō suffer and made him even more solitary and behind the struggles, what Saigyō only kept questioning himself was “how to manage his own heart,”<sup>41</sup> while facing innumerable disturbances and natural disasters in front of him. This approach of Kobayashi’s seems familiar with his earlier works discussed in the chapter one. Kobayashi writes “In the world of poetry in the late Heian period where people’s interest was solely on how to compose poems, Saigyō appeared with a question of how to know himself, which had never been regarded as a theme of a poem.”<sup>42</sup> Kobayashi cites several poems of Saigyō which include words *waga mi* わが身 “myself” and *waga kokoro* わが心 “my heart”. Saigyō’s contemplation on his self is well captured by Kobayashi and the latter’s effort to overcome his struggle with his self-consciousness carefully traces the Saigyō’s life path. What attracted Kobayashi most about Saigyō must have been his introspective character, capable of boldly and earnestly expressing himself rather than his figure as a poet.

Kobayashi describes Saigyō’s inner life as being filled with deep sorrow. When becoming a priest at the age of twenty-three, Saigyō must have been able to see his path as a poet, though did not know where the path would take him. Kobayashi argues that “Saigyō had a strong presentiment concerning his destiny.”<sup>43</sup> What was most important to Saigyō was to accept his destiny, to walk on the given path till his life ends and to keep expressing the meaning of life through poems. Kobayashi sees a sorrowful and solitary figure of Saigyō in this picture and as a person who had painfully experienced the same

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<sup>41</sup> Kobayashi 2003h, p. 181.

<sup>42</sup> Kobayashi 2003h, p. 178.

<sup>43</sup> Kobayashi 2003h, p. 173

feelings, Kobayashi casts a sympathetic glance on this poet and tries to learn how to overcome internal pains arising from the struggle with his self.

Giving an example of one of Saigyō's later poems<sup>44</sup>, Kobayashi analyzes the process of how pain goes through one's heart. Often times, one suffers from emotional pain that he cannot easily remove by himself. What Saigyō did in the same situation was to face those pains without distracting himself, and to regard them as his destiny. However, although they still remain in his heart, he would feel something starts to be clarified keenly, as Kobayashi writes "Saigyō would have looked at the ice of the waterside for a long time until his growing pains freeze."<sup>45</sup> When the pain becomes frozen, words would come out from Saigyō's mouth and a poem is born.

Each poem has its independent form, which cannot be changed by the taste or the idea of its readers. However, the mind of a poet who breathes life into his poems should not be understood unless the readers perceive it with their living mind. When Kobayashi repeatedly uses the word "solitary" to describe Saigyō, Kobayashi himself should have been feeling the indescribable sadness, from which he had never averted his eyes. The sorrowful mind of Saigyō's condensed in a form of poetry touches the sadness in the mind of Kobayashi's and they sympathize with each other. Sadness in each individual's heart cannot often be perceived by the outside, thus one has but to bear the pain on his own shoulders and to live. No one can help him by taking his place. However, Saigyō whom Kobayashi tenaciously describes as a solitary person must have known how to save himself. Nagafuji Takeshi 永藤武 (1944-2000), a professor of Japanese literature writes in his journal titled "Kobayashi Hideo sono tamashii no yasuragi-'Saigyō' to

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<sup>44</sup> The poem goes とりわきて心もしみてさえぞ渡る衣河みにきたる今日しも.

<sup>45</sup> Kobayashi 2003h, p. 186

‘Sanetomo’ towo tooshite” 小林秀雄・その魂の安らぎ—『西行』と『実朝』とを  
通して that “if a storm in one’s solitary heart could obtain poetry as a form of his destiny,  
there would be a path where people’s minds could interact with each other over time by  
the work of poetic spirit though the storm still remains as it is. It is when one’s heart  
closed by solitude can be liberated by widening and deepening his spirit that his  
consciousness could not have reached.”<sup>46</sup> By having learned how Saigyō had endured  
solitude and painfully tried to express himself in his poems, Kobayashi felt himself close  
to this poet and the great salvation and calm stoicism was brought to him.

Saigyō to Kobayashi was an intimate figure whose main theme was on his self.  
As Kobayashi mentioned that most poets during Saigyō’s time would have never held an  
interest in observing and expressing themselves and their inner life, it is assumed that  
what Saigyō had accomplished in his poems must have been regarded as particularly  
original among people then. This reminds one of how the public regarded Kobayashi  
when he made his debut as a literary critic. In terms of observing themselves from within,  
Saigyō through his poems and Kobayashi through his criticism, both must share a similar  
nature and they should have been searching for their own *kan* to capture themselves  
firmly.

Having discussed how Kobayashi captured Saigyō, I would like to suggest that  
there is a particular approach that Kobayashi adopted to describe not only Saigyō but  
many other figures he has written about. It is that Kobayashi first finds analogies between  
him and objects and relates them in order to express himself. As his approach toward the  
war in the chapter one and Saigyō well show, Kobayashi’s essays on the classics, on

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<sup>46</sup> Nagafuji 1988, p.13.

history and on tradition always bear a strong idea about one's destiny. The most important thing for Kobayashi may have been how deeply one can immerse himself into the heart of the figures and of the past and how he then can experience it at the present time. Sharing the same destiny with figures in the past and having a keen experience particular to an individual and finding a connection between it and the past was the best way to appreciate and sympathize with history directly to Kobayashi. This can provide us with a more concrete idea about Kobayashi's *kan*. Kobayashi felt the solitude and sorrow of Saigyō's as if it were his own and succeeded in entering the heart of Saigyō and in seeing what this poet saw from within in his own understanding. Some critics have shown a rather critical attitude toward this approach saying it was the direct cause of making Kobayashi's criticism less captivating in the long run. This shall be examined in chapter four.

### **Miyamoto Musashi and His Writings**

The core focus in chapter two is on Kobayashi's understanding of a legendary warrior, Miyamoto Musashi. Musashi, a warrior of the seventeenth century, was not only a master of the sword but also a painter and a calligrapher whose skill is considered to be of the first rank. Although the name of Musashi is well known and books on him are widely read in Japan, this does not mean that people know him well. His life still remains mystical.

Musashi's famous treatise on sword fighting and its strategy is called *Gorin no sho* 五輪書, known as *The Book of Five Rings* in English. Musashi was fifty-nine years old when he set himself up to compose this work in a cave called Reigandō located in the west of the Kumamoto castle in 1643: he spent the last two years of his life there.

Musashi was always a wanderer never having a family nor dwelling in one place for a long time. However, according to Tokitsu Kenji who is the author of *Miyamoto Musashi His Life and Writings*, Musashi's last decade was a period of the "accomplishment of the transmission," for after moving to Kyūshū, "in 1634 he (Musashi) was the guest of Lord Ogasawara of Kokura, whose vassal Musashi's adoptive son was, and starting in 1640 he entered into the service of Lord Hosokawa<sup>47</sup> with the title of Guest of the Lord. There he passed the most peaceful period of his life, devoting himself to various artistic pursuits and the transmission of the art of his school of swordsmanship."<sup>48</sup>

The *Gorin no sho* which I shall analyze by comparing Kobayashi's understanding of Musashi is brief but very dense in content. Thanks to Musashi's having dedicated this book to his disciple Terao Magonojō 寺尾孫之丞 (1611-1672), Musashi's thought on swordsmanship is still accessible today. However, because of Musashi's concentrated way of writing, it is likely that many interpretations and understandings are possible and the true meaning of each sentence can go unnoticed unless one pays close attention to it.

### ***Kan no me and Ken no me***

In his speech, Kobayashi places particular importance on Musashi's thought. What I would like to analyze most in this chapter is Musashi's idea of *kan no me* 観の目 and *ken no me* 見の目 and how Kobayashi interprets the difference. Tokitsu uses a word "looking" for *kan no me* and "seeing" for *ken no me* in his translation, and my thesis follows his terms. Kobayashi writes:

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<sup>47</sup> Hosokawa Tadatoshi 細川忠利 (1586-1641) was a lord of the Kumamoto castle in the early Edo period. He invited Musashi to live at his court as his guest and also greatly appreciated Musashi's talent in a broad range of art. They were about the same age and their friendship lasted until Hosokawa died at the age of fifty-six in 1641.

<sup>48</sup> Tokitsu, *Miyamoto Musashi His Life and Writings*, 2004, p.5

Musashi says that there are two ways of looking, *kan* (looking) and *ken* (seeing). In “Hyōhō sanjū go kajō” 兵法三十五箇条 “Thirty-five Instructions on Strategy,”<sup>49</sup> which was written for Lord Hosokawa Tadatōshi, there is an article called “The Way of Looking.” Musashi says that when one faces his adversary in sword fighting, he has to “look powerfully, see gently.”<sup>50</sup> If I borrowed Musashi’s word, *ken no me* is the usual and normal work of eye, which intellectually analyzes the movement of the enemy. There is another eye that intuitively grasps the whole existence of the adversary. It is the eye that looks “without moving your eyes” and looks at “what is close as something that is distant.” While the usual eye tries to see things, there is also an eye in the heart that does not intend to see. This is so called the mind’s eye. The will to see things clouds the eye. Therefore, Musashi tells us to see gently and look powerfully.<sup>51</sup>

I would like first to think about *ken*, which, according to Kobayashi, is the normal work of eye. It seems that this function of eye is exercised when the eyes see an object in a linear way on a condition that there is a certain distance between them. Nothing intervenes between the eye and the object, thus the image appearing in the eye is very clear and evident. However, there can be a limit in this way of seeing because it never captures the whole figure of the object due to the limited dimensions that human eyes are allowed to see at a time. In addition, one often tends to believe that what comes into view is the correct picture of the object but, depending on the distance between the subject and the object, the angle, the light and other various conditions easily change the appearance of the object. In using the *ken no me*, as a consequence, one is prone to be beguiled to see things clearly.

On the other hand, the *kan no me* allows a broader and wider perspective, which enables one to see the object not only from the front but from the sides and even from the

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<sup>49</sup> Musashi wrote this work in 1641 two years before beginning to write the *Gorin no sho*. Because the subject matter of several articles of “Hyōhō sanjū go kajō” is very similar to that of the *Gorin*, the *latter* can be considered an elaboration of the former.

<sup>50</sup> All the words put in parentheses in this quotation is from Tokitsu’s translation of *Gorin no sho* in *Miyamoto Musashi His Life and Writings*.

<sup>51</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.164.

back. Compared to the linear line of *ken*, *kan* is a viewpoint capable of seeing an object from any directions in a broad space. This space can include the subject itself. In a battlefield, for example, this *kan no me* captures the movement of both the subject and his adversary at the same time. As this suggests, *kan* requires a ceaseless practice of using one's mind rather than his eye in order to see what is not visible from the *ken no me*. If this viewpoint is attained, the subject can have a mastery of his body as well as his mind. As Musashi writes in the article "The Way of Gripping the Sword" in the Scroll of Water in the *Gorin no sho*, "it is not good to let the hand or the sword become fixed or frozen. A fixed hand is a dead hand; a hand that does not become fixed is alive."<sup>52</sup> Attaining the mind which is transformable like water is the way for one to achieve the *kan* and to be liberated from being fixed. To be alive means to be able to move both in a physical and a spiritual sense. There arises a flow of dynamic energy. Only when one's hand is not fixed, his body can move in any instant. The possibility to gain more viewpoints might reside in the practice of renewing oneself in everyday life.

Kobayashi also gives a definition of *kan*, which seems very similar to what Musashi has described above. Kobayashi says "*kan* originally has a meaning that it rejects to see things from or by depending on a certain fixed point and that it sympathizes with the reality by negating all limitations in it."<sup>53</sup> It seems that both Musashi and Kobayashi were saying that things can be seen only when one sees not with the brain which is full of established ideas or of learned knowledge and, not with the eye, which can easily be deceived by the mere appearance but with the heart which is never affected by those limitations.

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<sup>52</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.153.

<sup>53</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.164.

## Breaking through the Eye as an Organ

I would like to give further thought to *kan* and *ken*. Among the nine rules to practice the way of strategy in the Scroll of Earth, Musashi writes “Perceive and understand that which is not visible from the outside.”<sup>54</sup> Often times in life, one is required to learn things even by what he cannot see as well as what he sees. This suggests that the act of seeing can be defined as a complicated effort to see what is beyond the visible. However, one does not pay much attention to this fact and thinks that he simply sees things with his eyes and that his brain analyzes or judges what is transmitted. This is true in a sense, but there also resides the possibility in anyone to go further, which is to break through eye as a mere organ and thereby to allow oneself to perceive things more deeply. In order to achieve this, one needs to train oneself in seeing, which Kobayashi describes as a purification of vision.

Musashi gives an example of a carpenter to illustrate the way, saying “a carpenter follows his way by skillfully making various tools and knowing well how to use them. He correctly lays out construction plans using black cords and a square.”<sup>55</sup> A carpenter is a person who is capable of seeing the essential qualities of the wood and his tools. His vision concerning these materials should by far excel that of those who are not in this occupation. In the case of a warrior, he needs a vision to correctly see the advantage of his weapon and his enemy whose body and mind are constantly moving. To be more exact, how does a warrior’s *kan no me* work in a battle field? One of the most significant conditions in fighting, especially in individual fighting, is that no one is allowed enough time to give the fight thorough consideration. Each decision has to be made and executed

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<sup>54</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.149.

<sup>55</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.140.



in a moment and according to the adversary's movement. In this situation, although one's *ken no me* might be seeing the sword of his adversary, he is required to infer the possible attack from his enemy, to measure the distance and to discern the cadence with his *kan no me*. Thus, a warrior must be capable of seeing inside the enemy's mind as if it were his own. The eye as an organ only plays a little part in the *kan no me* where it sees invisible things with the mind. Rather, eyes can be a hindrance in using the *kan no me*. What Musashi says about seeing "without moving eyes" might mean to see things beyond this hindrance and to break through the single focus of an eye by expanding one's vision to the whole surroundings at the same time.

### **Emptiness in *Kan***

Having discussed the differences between *ken no me* and *kan no me*, it is necessary to emphasize that the latter requires great practice using one's mind. In addition, another important factor that differentiates these two is that there exists emptiness in seeing things with the *kan no me*. Musashi mentions emptiness in the Scroll of Heaven as:

The meaning of emptiness is space where there is nothing, and I also envisage emptiness as that which cannot be known. Emptiness, of course, is where there is nothing. Knowing that which does not exist while knowing that which exists -- that is emptiness. In this world, some people think of emptiness in an erroneous fashion, interpreting it as not distinguishing anything. This is the product of a mind gone astray. It is not true emptiness.<sup>56</sup>

"That which exists" indicates things that are visible, in other words, things the *ken no me* is capable of capturing. Musashi might be saying that true emptiness only exists in what the *kan no me* perceives. As mentioned before, while the *ken no me* is like a linear

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<sup>56</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.195.

line, by having the *kan no me*, there arises an emptiness which enables one to see deeper things because his mind is liberated not being restricted by any matter or any dimensions as Kobayashi says in his speech, “*Kūkan* 空觀 (vision in emptiness) is not a method on Truth which is a product of human knowledge and experience but a way to attain reality. If we make our mind empty in our understanding about reality, we can for the first time sympathize with it.”<sup>57</sup> Whether a warrior can defeat his adversary depends not only on his techniques but on his capacity of perceiving emptiness in the latter. By having a pure mind like a mirror, a warrior is able to see this emptiness without distortion. Emptiness exists only where space and time disappears.

### **Thought as an Act**

Kobayashi says he considers Musashi a great warrior among the others for the reason that Musashi “had attained the universal thought directly from his own experience in his youth without a need of education, which had become conventional.”<sup>58</sup> This remark seems to have a connection to the Musashi’s unique idea about the act of winning. To win does not only mean to defeat one’s adversary but to conquer the various conditions in a battlefield. Musashi believed nothing but an act to lead him to win. Strategies do not reside in a notion but only in an actual act through executing his body. Even when composing the *Gorin no sho*, Musashi never needed to “borrow from the ancient Buddhist or Confucianist writings” nor to “use ancient examples from the chronicles or the tradition of the military art.”<sup>59</sup> The only truth to him was what he had learned and was thoroughly convinced of through his mind and body. Musashi expressed

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<sup>57</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.156.

<sup>58</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.156.

<sup>59</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.138.

this by using the words “winning” or “to be victorious” as “You must be victorious through the quality of people you employ, victorious through the way in which you utilize a great number of people, victorious by behaving correctly yourself in accordance with the way...”<sup>60</sup> To Musashi, being victorious should have meant to see things by the *kan no me* and to overcome them. Acquiring this *kan* ultimately means to be victorious over attaining a view of life, which is when one is finally liberated. To Kobayashi, who had been caught by his self-consciousness for a long time, this idea of expressing thought only through an act must have opened his eye. Mere notions only become a cause of people’s confusion and misunderstandings, which leads to a limitless argument. Therefore, act should precede the notion. It is this effort in trying to achieve something through an act that can become a true thought rooted in each individual.

Comparing Saigyō and Musashi, one can find something consistent regarding the *kan* in each of their art. Saigyō says he never pictures flowers or birds in composing a poem. Those visual images were unnecessary to him. In this case, only the *kan no me* is working inside Saigyō. On the other hand, warriors like Musashi need both *ken no me* and *kan no me* as their eyes are required to see an moving object whose movement and mind are difficult to read in advance. While one places his eye on his adversary’s hand and on his sword using the *ken no me*, the eye should not be fixed there because his energy concentrating in one place means that his other parts are completely empty to be struck. *Kan no me* never locates its viewpoint. It is the eye that sees what is invisible. Only through the heart, what needs to be seen can appear in front of one’s eye. The *kan no me* frees one from all the limitations of the physiological eye and allows him to capture the whole picture of an object and also the subject himself too.

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<sup>60</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.150.

## CHAPTER III

### KOBAYASHI'S IDEA ABOUT "VISION"

#### A Brief Introduction of Henri Bergson and His *Time and Free Will*

The French philosopher in the nineteenth century, Henri Bergson (1859-1941) is another figure on whom Kobayashi places special importance as equally as on Miyamoto Musashi in the speech. Kobayashi had been an avid reader of Bergson's works since he was a college student and there is no doubt that the latter's thought had an immense impact on Kobayashi. His vast study on Bergson titled *Kansō 感想 Impressions* Kobayashi had serialized in a magazine for five years from 1958 to 1963 but ended up not finishing. Although Kobayashi strictly prohibited its publication as a book or within his complete works, with his family's consent, this work was nonetheless published posthumously.

Bergson is one of the most influential philosophers of his day. In his unique philosophy, he rejects conceptual methods, asserts that we should not neglect things that cannot be measured by scientific means and focuses on intuition which he strongly believed can go much deeper than the intellect. According to the translator's preface in *Time and Free Will*<sup>61</sup>, which was Bergson's doctoral thesis, for Bergson "reality is not to be reached by any elaborate construction of thought: It is given in immediate experience as a flux, a continuous process of becoming, to be grasped by intuition, by sympathetic insight. Concepts break up the continuous flow of reality into parts external to one another, they further the interests of language and social life and useful primarily for

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<sup>61</sup> The original title in French is *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*. In English, *An essay on the immediate data of consciousness*

practical purposes.”<sup>62</sup> *Time and Free Will* is an attempt to dispel the arguments against free will. To Bergson, these arguments only come from people’s confusion about freedom. Bergson writes “Freedom is therefore a fact, and among the facts which we observe there is none clearer.”<sup>63</sup> Often times, people wish to know how they have made or reached a certain decision and whether it was done according to their reason or against it. The decision, it seems, is a wish or an aspiration coming from the deepest part of their heart. When one’s self is oscillating between two contrary feelings, according to Bergson, it eventually reaches a conclusion by changing or developing itself as it passes each state of mind. Some might be inclined to think that in this situation, we split ourselves into two persons, the self which feels and the self which acts, but how could it be possible for one to have two different selves inside? Is one’s character always his self no matter how many phases and hues it possesses? Bergson asserts that “if it is agreed to call every act free which springs from the self and from the self alone, the act which bears the mark of our personality is truly free, for our self alone will lay claim to its paternity.”<sup>64</sup>

In order to prove that the arguments of both defenders and opponents of free will are equally meaningless, Bergson uses a diagram that shows the normal work of the human mind when one is hesitant to make a decision. There is a starting point M, a middle point O and there the path splits into two points X and Y. Suppose one has not been able to decide whether he should execute the action X or not do as in Y. The middle point O is where the decision is made. Those who defend free will argue that the person is free because he could take either OX or OY. Even if he chose the action X, he “hesitated

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<sup>62</sup> Bergson 2001, P.vi.

<sup>63</sup> Bergson 2001, p.221.

<sup>64</sup> Bergson 2001, p.173.

and deliberated, therefore Y was possible.”<sup>65</sup> On the other hand, opponents, who are also called determinists, would claim that the person had to choose OX because the path is already traced out and thus he had no choice but to do so. Bergson refutes to the former that it is not possible to speak of a path OX or OY before the action is actually executed and the latter that “before the path was traced out there was no direction, either possible or impossible, for the very simple reason that there could not yet be any question of a path.”<sup>66</sup> Bergson attributes this confusion arising from both parties to their attempt to understand free will by means of space symbolized as a path. An action performed by a ceaseless flow of consciousness, however, has to be considered in time. “Time is not a line along which one can pass again. Certainly, once it has elapsed, we are justified in picturing the successive moments as external to one another and in thus thinking of a line traversing space; but it must then be understood that this line does not symbolize the time which is passing but the time which has passed.”<sup>67</sup>

If another point about space can briefly be mentioned, according to Bergson, there is a tendency that when people think about something, they often do so using the idea of space, which is quantitative. For example, when one compares two things that are alike in appearance but bear different characteristics, how can he do that? It is only when a person neglects the individual differences and only considers what those objects have in common that he can compare or enumerate them. Here, an abstraction by eliminating the concrete elements is being performed. This is what Bergson means by thinking in a quantitative space. The qualitative elements are not to be considered here. The problem is that people apply this idea of space to that of time as well. Time, to Bergson, is like a

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<sup>65</sup> Bergson 2001, p.179.

<sup>66</sup> Bergson 2001, p. 182.

<sup>67</sup> Bergson 2001, p. 182.

flowing river that cannot be cut off anywhere and should be considered in a qualitative way. Each moment has its hue and quality, which cannot possibly be equalized with the other moments for comparison. But, as one minute is counted by the swinging of a pendulum by sixty times, people regard time as quantitative, putting one moment upon another eternally. The idea of space and time to which Bergson refers is hard to understand and this thesis will not introduce his idea about them further, but, as already mentioned, the confusion of free will, according to Bergson, arises from applying the idea of space to time. Although Bergson did not mention free will in any of his later works, his firm conviction about the truth in this notion can be perceived throughout his thought.

### **The Enlarged Perception Called a “Vision”**

Life seems to demand that people look straight at the direction they have to go. It does not allow them to look to the right, to the left or behind, because they must live before deliberating and seeing. Even though one lives being surrounded by a vast number of sensory stimulations, he tends to limit his five senses in order to perceive and selects only what has practical interest to him. Only what is of use to his action matters and he neglects the rest to make his life more efficient. This pattern sounds very normal to many people and this habit might even be implanted consciously or unconsciously. But Bergson claims that there exists a different way of perceiving things, which is given only to certain people and that they possess an enlarged perception called “vision.” According to Kobayashi, this vision has its equivalent in *kan*, discussed in the earlier chapter.

Vision in a daily usage has several meanings such as eyesight, dream or illusion but Kobayashi argues that to Bergson, “this word possesses a theological sense that only

chosen people can see God.”<sup>68</sup> Let us look at the word “vision” more closely. Most people would ask in the first place how one could ever see more than his eyes see, let alone enlarge his perception. Bergson asserts that those who possess this vision are artists whose work is precisely to see what normal people cannot see. They are the ones who laboriously and consciously go deeper into their perception without relying on their memory or learned knowledge, thus any matter seems to them as if they saw it for the first time in their life. Painters are a good example of this. People find a rose or the ocean beautiful, but do we know how many colors or characteristics our eyes perceive from them? How much do we see each object as a whole existence? Bergson explains why artists are able to possess this vision:

Now and then, by a lucky accident, men arise whose senses or whose consciousness are less adherent to life. Nature has forgotten to attach their faculty of perceiving to their faculty of acting. When they look at a thing, they see it for itself, and not for themselves. They do not perceive simply with a view to action; they perceive in order to perceive, -for nothing, for the pleasure of doing so...It is therefore a much more direct vision of reality that we find in the different arts; and it is because the artist is less intent on utilizing his perception that he perceives a greater number of things.<sup>69</sup>

In spite of what Bergson claims here, life demands practicality in action and even society often aims at efficiency by conserving energy and reducing wastes. One sees only what he needs or wishes and does not see what is not necessary. Thus, our perception appears according to how we react to the external objects. Like attaining the *kan*, what Bergson calls vision also requires an exceptional effort to see and to capture the whole face of an object without being preoccupied by the material side of life.

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<sup>68</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.180.

<sup>69</sup> Bergson 2007, p.114.



## Words by Means of Conceptualizing Perception

In his speech, Kobayashi touches on the problem of words by means of conceptualizing perception. He recalls one period when he would not write anything or socialize with any writers but was preoccupied only with seeing antiques, saying that “I felt keenly then the difficulty of bearing the silence of paintings and sculptures... When seriously asking questions regarding paintings and intensifying one’s concentrations, I felt the strain of having to change words into perception, the reverse of turning impressions to words.”<sup>70</sup> It seems that Kobayashi’s idea about both *kan* and *vision* and moreover, his attitude as a critic of his life is deeply rooted in his skepticism about analysis explained by maneuvered words in various concepts. If *kan* and vision are what enable our eyes to be liberated from all limitations in seeing an object, words can also be considered as an agent that limits our capturing and perceiving the whole existence of the object. For example, our emotions are undoubtedly complicated and it is such a difficult task to describe them precisely with words. Even more than describing emotions, how can one ever know what they actually are? Can it be possible for him to label this unknown state of mind an emotion? Although we necessarily express ourselves by means of words, the habit of translating emotions that do not have any contour into solidified words is what is normally done without questioning. Bergson writes in his autobiographical essay that “my initiation into the true philosophical method began the moment I threw overboard verbal solutions, having found in the inner life an important field of experiment.”<sup>71</sup> Bergson necessarily does not reject words itself here but asserts that one should not assume that any complicated matter can be explained and described

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<sup>70</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, pp.182-183.

<sup>71</sup> Bergson 2007, p.71.

with precise words whose nature is to solidify perceptions, impressions and emotions which are ceaselessly changing and developing.

In *Time and Free Will*, Bergson gives an example of how people replace a personal perception with a precise and impersonal concept, using the scent of a rose:

I smell a rose and immediately confused recollections of childhood come back to my memory. In truth, these recollections have not been called up by the perfume of the rose: I breathe them with the very scent; it means all that to me. To others it will smell differently. -It is always the same scent, you will say, but associated with different ideas. -I am quite willing that you should express yourself in this way; but do not forget that you have first removed the personal element from the different impressions which the rose makes on each one of us; you have retained only the objective aspect, that part of the scent of the rose which is public property and thereby belongs to space. Only thus was it possible to give a name to the rose and its perfume.<sup>72</sup>

Memory is not stable. It always changes its appearance by expanding or contracting according to the frequency of its usage. But words neglect the transformability of the memory and they change its unique feature which is different to each individual into a common concept. The moment the word, “rose” is uttered, it no longer is a rose filled with a personal memory, but a rose in general, existing in any parts of the world and in any time in history. Bergson was well aware of the conceptual function of words and must have apprehended that it could easily neglect the inner life of an each individual has and that it is always irreplaceable.

Kobayashi’s thought and conviction about words are based on Bergson’s idea. Selecting any perception and molding it with words into a universal concept was never to be the way to see the true face of the matter to Kobayashi. His deep trust in gazing and listening to objects without ever attempting to conceptualize them can be seen here. This attitude is very evident in *Motoori Norinaga*, which is Kobayashi’s last monumental

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<sup>72</sup> Bergson 2001, pp.161-162.

work. Kobayashi regards Bergson's vision as a thing that can be attained only by being liberated from the practical actions of our life and by observing the subtle change with the mind's eye. The purity in perception comes from a direct vision of reality. Artists, as mentioned above as an example of those who attained this vision, never tires themselves with seeing their objects. By a constant effort in enlarging their perception, they become united with the objects, and for the first time, artists find a unique life in the constant mobility within the objects.

### **Similarities between Musashi and Bergson**

Comparing Musashi's *Gorin no sho* and Bergson's *Time and Free Will* by focusing on *kan* and "vision" suggests clear similarities between their thought. Although Kobayashi does not mention these points of comparison in his speech, I would like to introduce some of them. The interesting thing to point out is that Bergson plays an important role in providing a clue to understand, or even explaining Musashi's *kan*, which, because of his concise writing, may puzzle the readers of his book.

Although cited in my earlier chapter, concerning "The Way of Looking in Strategy" of the Scroll of Water in the *Gorin no sho*, it says, "It is necessary to look at what is distant as something that is close and what is close as something that is distant."<sup>73</sup> At first thought, it seemed that this line only deals with space in terms of not fixing one's eye on one point. However, if a thing exists in space, it does in time as well. Also Bergson's *Time and Free Will* gives a good example of a certain movement being executed along with time. In describing the graceful movements, Bergson writes:

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<sup>73</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.153.

As those movements are easy which prepare the way for others, we are led to find a superior ease in the movements which can be foreseen, in the present attitudes in which future attitudes are pointed out and, as it were, prefigured... Thus the perception of ease in motion passes over into the pleasure of mastering the flow of time and of holding the future in the present. A third element comes in when the graceful movements submit to a rhythm and are accompanied by music. For the rhythm and measure, by allowing us to foresee to a still greater extent the movements of the dancer, make us believe that we now control them.<sup>74</sup>

In anything which we call very graceful we imagine ourselves able to detect, besides the lightness which is a sign of mobility, some suggestion of a possible movement towards ourselves, of a virtual and even nascent sympathy.<sup>75</sup>

Can what Musashi says about looking at “what is distant as something that is close” also be applied to time, as these arguments by Bergson show? For warriors who constantly place themselves in a battlefield where the boundary between life and death is extremely close, it is without question required for them to attain the eye to predict the future movement of his adversary in the present moment, that is to say, in Bergson’s words, to “master the flow of time.” If this can be achieved, the warrior has control of himself as well as of his opponent. A similar idea in terms of perceiving the possible movement can be found in The Scroll of Fire in the *Gorin no sho* too, where it says, “you can perceive the will of your opponents before he makes a move. If he intends to strike, you grasp the first letters of strike-*stri*-and you do not allow him to complete his striking movement.”<sup>76</sup>

Another similarity regarding time is that both Musashi and Bergson claim that in all things, cadence or rhythm exists. Rhythm has length, dynamics and speed that constantly repeats itself. It is a flow of energy that is inherent in any existence. Musashi says:

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<sup>74</sup> Bergson 2001, p.12.

<sup>75</sup> Bergson 2001, p.13.

<sup>76</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.172.

In this world we can see that different cadences exist. The cadences of the way of the dance and of musicians with their stringed or wind instruments are all concordant and without distortion. Going through the various ways of the martial arts, there are different cadences depending on whether you are shooting a bow, firing a gun, or riding a horse. You must not go against cadence in any of the arts, nor in any handcraft.<sup>77</sup>

In any martial arts, there exist both mobile and immobile movements. Even when a person is not moving, there is a cadence flowing in his body. This can be called an interval between each movement. Cadence is like a gear which shows the firmest stability when each of its teeth is tightly locked with one another but when two discordant cadences meet, it can destroy the energy that each tooth has. In combat, discerning the enemy's cadence can govern the question of win or lose. Fighting in the same cadence only allows one's enemy to predict one's possible movement. Thus, discerning and utilizing the cadence which is discordant with the adversary is the way to defeat them.

Bergson, on the other hand, explains rhythm using an example from architecture. He says "we find in architecture, in the very midst of this startling immobility, certain effects analogous to those of rhythm. The symmetry of form, the indefinite repetition of the same architectural motive, causes our faculty of perception to oscillate between the same and the same again."<sup>78</sup> Even in an immobile object, it possesses a certain rhythm. Having a rhythm means that the object has a life and it breathes. Like a painting and architecture, they show their motion in colors, in dimensions and even in a single line.

Comparison between Musashi and Bergson has taught that the *kan* and "vision" has a strong relationship both with space and time. Going beyond the two dimensions that eye can perceive at a time and beyond the present moment, it is a complicated effort to

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<sup>77</sup> Tokitsu 2004, p.148.

<sup>78</sup> Bergson 2001, pp. 15-16.

break through the limitations of both that surround any beings. Although there is a good similarity between Musashi and Bergson as the passages above demonstrate, Kobayashi did not mention any of them in his speech but simply said that the word “vision” has an equivalent nuance to the *kan* without connecting these two figures. What would Kobayashi have said if he had mentioned the above passages? The ultimate goals of Musashi and Bergson in each of their professions were obviously different. However, it should be asserted that some of the Bergson’s thought is surprisingly in accordance with that of Musashi’s and that the former has involuntarily explained the latter’s *kan no me* with precise images and examples.

### **Bergson and Kobayashi**

Kobayashi’s study on Bergson, entitled *Kansō*, started to be published in a magazine about ten years after Kobayashi’s speech, “Watakushi no jinseikan.” Thus, what Kobayashi talks about concerning Bergson and his thought in the speech is considered to be Kobayashi’s earlier phase and vision as a philosopher before he seriously set out on writing. Having great interest in science since his youth and being well acquainted with it, Kobayashi must have had a bright hope that his study could provide his readers with a good introduction of Bergson’s philosophy and diffuse the unique thought that had impressed Kobayashi himself. However, *Kansō* was abandoned after five years of serialization. What made Kobayashi give up writing on Bergson whom he had respected for all his life?

One decisive reason is that Kobayashi as a literary person could not have had the capacity to understand the scrupulous scientific research Bergson had dedicated his whole life. As learning things on a paper and by actually experimenting them like feeling

the weight of each object are completely different experience, Kobayashi's understanding of Bergson might have not fully gone beyond philosophy. Yamazaki Kōtarō 山崎行太郎 (1947-), the author of *Kobayashi Hideo to Bergson* 小林秀雄とベルグソン *Kobayashi Hideo and Bergson*, argues that “When one starts to engage himself in studying physics or quantum theory, he needs to learn the scientific methods first because any field of study has its own premise. Without a basis of math or of the relating fields, Kobayashi must have felt embarrassed to realize the limit of his understanding which was only done inside his head.”<sup>79</sup> Science is a field of study that requires the strict logical explanation, which has to be presented in a proper order to head toward the right milestone. While the method that Bergson had adopted was purely that of a scientist, it is often pointed out that there is always a certain leap in Kobayashi's thought in terms of omitting the logical explanation and submitting a conclusion abruptly. Mentioning Kobayashi's logic throughout his works, Yoshimoto Takaaki in his talk with a novelist Kiyooka Takayuki 清岡卓行 (1922-2006) says that “Kobayashi might be detesting the necessary process to build his logic and to reproduce a historical figure by A is laid on B and C on B or he might be thinking that it is not of use to do such a thing.”<sup>80</sup> Although some points about Kobayashi's giving up writing on Bergson seem to be true, this fact of Kobayashi's tendency to omit logic and to assert a conclusion without providing an explanation can allow one to relate it to his belief on destiny discussed in my chapter one. To utilize various elements or viewpoints in order to understand one thing, to objectify or to expand its picture had never been adopted by Kobayashi. Things exist as they are and happen if it is necessary and there is no room for logic to interfere. This vision that Kobayashi had

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<sup>79</sup> Yamazaki 2001, p.45.

<sup>80</sup> Kiyooka, Yoshimoto 1991, p.10.

never relinquished appears in his last monumental work *Motoori Norinaga* most evidently.



## CHAPTER IV

### THE LAST PHASE OF KOBAYASHI'S "VISION"

#### From Bergson to Motoori Norinaga

Although this chapter does not discuss *Motoori Norinaga* extensively, I would like to touch on the last phase of Kobayashi's vision. There is no direct reference to Motoori Norinaga in Kobayashi's speech although his interest and sympathy toward this scholar of National Learning can briefly be found in this passage from his essay "Mujō to iu koto," published six years before the speech: "The only beautiful things are those that are immovable and resist explanation. This was Norinaga's strongest conviction. Nowadays, when explanations positively abound, this is the most carefully guarded of all secrets."<sup>81</sup> Kobayashi always had a distrust toward logic or ideologies which are conceptualized by means of words. The moment one labels something by words, the impression or the idea becomes solidified even though it is constantly changing as time progresses. This recalls Bergson's ideas on words. Of course, every person needs words for thinking but what is important here is that one can neglect many aspects of an object through reliance on words that illuminate only what can be verbalized and expressible. Kobayashi's attraction to both Bergson and Norinaga must have originated in this similarity and empathy in their attitudes toward words, despite their very different cultural backgrounds. Going to the heart of the matter without relying on verbal understanding was the most important to all three of them.

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<sup>81</sup> Keene 1984, p.606.

There is the term “pure perception” in Bergson’s philosophy. Every perception is always accompanied by memory and because the memory covers the object being perceived, one does not tend to see the very object standing in front of him. However, in pure perception, one is not affected by such an accumulated memory, which thus enables each object to appear as if it were seen for the first time. If one could leave his memory even for a little and immerse himself only relying on his perception of an object he sees, he will become a part of it or mingled with it. In *Motoori Norinaga*, Kobayashi writes “Norinaga’s object in his study of the classics lay in making old poems or other texts his own and in the way he used of his own heart/mind in seeing them... What he means by ‘to clarify the real intention of poems and to thoroughly understand the deepest meanings of them’ is that this experience ultimately allows one to have a sympathy with the poets.”<sup>82</sup> What Kobayashi wished to say by writing on Bergson and Norinaga was clearly that deep sympathy with an object by being united with it was the only way to understand and appreciate it.

### **Singular Vision--The Relationship between the Author and the Narrator in Kobayashi’s interpretation of the Uji chapters of *The Tale of Genji***

Sympathizing with someone means to place oneself in the emotional states or situations of the other. When this happens, the distinction between self and other no longer exists and the two share the same vision. To prove how Kobayashi persisted in a single vision where the subject and the object are in unity, I would like to give one example from the Uji chapters in *Genji monogatari* 源氏物語 (*The Tale of Genji*) written by Murasaki Shikibu 紫式部 in the early eleventh century.

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<sup>82</sup> Kobayashi 2004c, p.76.

Uji jūjō 宇治十帖 (the ten Uji chapters) is the last part of *The Tale of Genji*, consisting of ten chapters from “Hashihime” 橋姫 (The Lady at the Bridge) to “Yume no ukihashi” 夢浮橋 (The Floating Bridge of Dreams). While Genji, who is thrown into despair by his beloved Murasaki’s death, no longer appears in a story, his biological grandson Niou and his putative son Kaoru, who is in reality the son of the Third Princess and Kashiwagi, become the main characters. The chapters involve tangled love relationships and rivalry over the three princesses, Ōigimi, Nakanokimi, and their half-sister, Ukifune who is the unrecognized daughter of the Eighth Prince, a younger brother of Genji. The Eighth Prince quietly lives in Uji just south of the capital. Compared to the first parts of the *Genji*, the Uji chapters show a deeper tone of the Buddhist idea of evanescence.

Kobayashi, in his *Motoori Norinaga*, provides his own and Motoori’s interpretation of the episode of Ukifune attempting to commit suicide by throwing herself into the Uji River. Interestingly, both of them cast a compassionate and sympathetic gaze on Ukifune, and Kobayashi even considers her as an actual protagonist in the Uji chapters in contrast to Kaoru as the ostensible hero. What then is the role of the ill-fated Ukifune, whose life is dominated by both Kaoru and Niou in the Uji chapters? What words does the narrator use to describe her? One of Ukifune’s most impressive remarks describing her situation can be found in the “At Writing Practice” (Tenarai) chapter when she is rescued by the Bishop of Yokawa. Ukifune says, “I have been thrown out. I have nowhere to go.”<sup>83</sup> Kobayashi introduces Motoori’s firm conviction that Murasaki Shikibu’s intention in vividly depicting Kaoru as an introspective character and Niou as

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<sup>83</sup> Seidensticker 1992, p. 1135.

an active one was solely to create the character Ukifune, who does not have any unique traits but bears a fragile beauty that symbolizes the mutability of the world. It might therefore be assumed that the author lends more credence to Ukifune as a character to be saved than to those two princes.

Kobayashi asks his readers a question. Why does the author not allow Ukifune to end her life? Because Murasaki Shikibu never depicts Ukifune as the kind of a woman who has the courage to actually carry out her determination to commit suicide, as the narrator so well describes: “though she [Ukifune] had no great wish to live on, she was timid by nature, rather like the one we have all heard of who has set out across a log bridge and then changed her mind.”<sup>84</sup>

The following scene from “A Boat upon the Waters” (Ukifune) chapter shows Ukifune’s hesitation before her nurse. “Who should have been allowed to die first--- and where would she go now? Ukifune wanted to offer at least a hint of what was about to happen, but she knew that the old woman would shoot bolt upright and begin shrieking to the heaven.”<sup>85</sup> The only choice left for Ukifune, whose suicidal attempt ends up being unsuccessful, is to become a nun and to sever her relationship with Kaoru completely. On the other hand, Kaoru, who still cannot cut his attachment to Ukifune and has been informed of the truth about her missing, desperately sends Kogimi, her half-brother, as a messenger to her place to give her a letter, but in spite of Kaoru’s pleading to see her, Ukifune remains silent and tells Kogimi through the mouth of a nun that she is not in a state of replying to Kaoru.

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<sup>84</sup> Seidensticker 1992, p. 1155.

<sup>85</sup> Seidensticker 1992, p. 1096.

Motoori, in another commentary on the *Genji* titled *Genji monogatari tama no ogushi* 源氏物語玉の小櫛 (1799), also mentions Ukifune. In spite of his rather critical comment on her frivolity to betray Kaoru and to give her heart to Niou at first, Motoori shows a sympathetic feeling toward Ukifune by referring to several passages that describe her emotional conflicts beginning with the “Boat upon the Waters” chapter. Motoori, whose eye does not judge novels by morality but rather places high values onto the accurate and deceitless depiction of human emotions, casts a warm glance at Ukifune. Although one might think that ruining oneself merely for the sake of a love affair, as Kashiwagi and Ukifune do, is unwise and lacks of good-sense, as Motoori refers to Yûgiri’s words, “it is curious how irrelevant all the advice and all the promptings of your own conscience can sometimes seem”<sup>86</sup> when he loses his sense over someone.

How then can we summarize the ways in which both Kobayashi and Motoori interpret the way Ukifune is depicted? First, they claim that Ukifune is a character who has completely lost her personality and is tormented by her past and by being forced to live against her wish by her unfortunate destiny. Many passages describing her also evoke the sense of pity and pathos in readers. However, as Kobayashi writes and probably Motoori must also have believed, Murasaki Shikibu never abandoned Ukifune and Ukifune also cannot escape from the strong grip of this author either. Even a weak, vulnerable and immature being has a reason to keep living with unsteady steps.

The whole story ends in a rather abrupt way. The narrator describes Kaoru, who is in the end rejected by Ukifune as “it would seem that, as he examined the several possibilities, a suspicion crossed his mind: the memory of how he himself had behaved in

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<sup>86</sup> Seidensticker 1992, p.754.

earlier days made him ask whether someone might be hiding her from the world.”<sup>87</sup> How do we interpret this sentence? It seems that the narrator also attempts to prevent anyone from intruding to the inside of Ukifune’s heart. Kobayashi believes that only Murasaki Shikibu in the disguise of the narrator has access to Ukifune’s interior. He writes, “Neither a frivolous person called Niou nor sincere Kaoru cannot enter into the pathetic Ukifune. The author, hiding behind Ukifune’s back, seems to be asking her readers whether it is true that a person like Ukifune who is obviously immature does not know anything.”<sup>88</sup> The words might be used about both Kobayashi and Motoori’s attitude are kindness and compassion toward Ukifune. They do not hold much of an emotional element but rather it is their natural way of acknowledging and respecting the living experience of one misfortunate woman. While Ukifune is greatly indebted to Kaoru, she, knowing that Kaoru sees her only as a substitute for Ōigimi, can never love him, she is also suspicious of Niou’s love. We can assume that the only thing that Ukifune might have wished for is to be treated and loved not as a substitute for someone else but as one irreplaceable human being.

As opposed to Kobayashi’s idea of Ukifune being the main character in the Uji chapters, Yoshimoto Takaaki, in his article “Kobayashi Hideo ni tsuite” 小林秀雄について(1983), claims with a firm conviction that there is a misinterpretation of the text caused by Kobayashi and Motoori’s failure to differentiate the author from the narrator. To Yoshimoto, Kaoru is the one to whom the author directs her attention most. Even though Ukifune is brought back to life, Yoshimoto thinks she has made herself an existence that no longer belongs to any place in this world. The sense of resignation in life with a

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<sup>87</sup> Seidensticker 1992, p. 1184.

<sup>88</sup> Kobayashi 2004, p.172.

sorrowful and expressionless eye is the only thing Ukifune now possesses. There is not the slightest indication of the author's being sympathetic to Ukifune. On the other hand, Yoshimoto describes Kaoru's life in a rather unique way:

“It seems to me that the Uji chapters are roughly about Kaoru as a main character who grows up facing his mother's cold attitude and because of this, can only have a peculiar sexual love and about Ōigimi, who is ruined by this peculiar love of his and about Ukifune as the living image of Ōigimi. Kaoru is a person who possesses this love in which he can only exchange romantic love with princesses between whom love no longer exists and Ōigimi in enervated to death by impatience. Ukifune being taken advantage of the impossibility of Kaoru's sexual love by Niou ends up ruining herself.”<sup>89</sup>

How can we evaluate Yoshimoto's interpretation? Is it actually that the eye of the author directs the reader toward Kaoru most? When it comes to Kaoru's unique background – he was born as an illegitimate child, whose true paternity is kept secret – and to his lack of an image of his real father, Kashiwagi, Kaoru's life is compared to that of Genji whose remembrance of his mother is very faint. Kaoru regards the fact of his not knowing who he really is as if he had something physically defective. His loneliness grows even deeper when he receives extraordinarily kind treatment from his relatives and the public. Kaoru's sense of something lacking in him indicates his longing for the fatherly figure who might comfort him and fill his solitary heart. Similar to Genji's, Kaoru's life begins when he deeply becomes aware of the loss of his father. The inevitability of life points to a road for Kaoru to wander about in life; however, he already knows how empty the world is to him.

Although one can see that the way in which Kaoru is depicted suggests Murasaki Shikibu's warm glance at him and also, as mentioned above, that Kaoru should have the innate disposition to take over the role of Genji, the reader might feel a little hesitant to

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<sup>89</sup> Yoshimoto 1983, p.117.

regard Kaoru as the main character in the Uji chapters, contrary to Yoshimoto's argument. Why should this be the case? It seems that the author does not lay the burden only on Kaoru but that she entrusts her eye and heart to Ōigimi and Ukifune as well. Part of the reason for this is that these two princesses are like a medium into whom the author can put her thought and feelings, and thereby control the story itself. One clear example of this can be seen in Ōigimi's determination in rejecting Kaoru's courtship after her father's death. There seems to be a clear contrast between the attitude of Ōigimi toward her life and that of Ukifune, both of whom keep a certain distance from Kaoru, which also shows how the author considers life. For Ōigimi, even though she has determined to let her younger sister, Nakanokimi, marry Kaoru and to live her life on her own, it is necessary that she always accept this reality by objectifying herself. No matter how insufficient her life would seem or how removed she is from the happiness of women, Ōigimi devotes herself to supporting and watching her sister. On the other hand, Ukifune, being pursued by two men, suffers from living in two different worlds, one of which releases her heart from restraints and the other pulling it back to reality. In contrast to Ōigimi, Ukifune is described as a person who fails to acquire the ability of self-objectification and instead yields to ruining herself. Based on this argument, it seems that each viewpoint of Kaoru, Ōigimi and Ukifune is a reflection of the inner side of the author in the guise of the narrator.

What can be pointed out is that both Kobayashi and Motoori consider that the viewpoint of the author and the narrator can be the same and provide a single vision. The self of the author is that of the narrator. This clearly shows the main principle of Kobayashi's in seeing things: the only way to appreciate and understand any matter is for



one to be united with it. If there were an imaginary narrator who is not at all controlled by the author, the eye of “the other,” who can objectify both the author and characters, could be created. When the idea of “others” lacks in oneself, any picture can be seen as partial and only compatible with him. How does “the lack of others” affect Kobayashi’s way of thinking?

### **Self and Other**

Having discussed Kobayashi’s main periods from his earlier to his later years, I find that Kobayashi’s idea about *kan* is deeply rooted in his seeing his objects --to be more exact, in how much sympathy and direct interaction he had elicited from them. Talking about Bergson’s “vision.” Kobayashi says: “It has the power to penetrate through the barrier between the seer and the seen.”<sup>90</sup> If the seer is Kobayashi himself, the seen can be referred as “other.” I would like to give some consideration to the issue of “self” and “other” for Kobayashi as my final analysis of him in this thesis.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Kobayashi’s criticism began in his tenacious pursuit of the self. The impact of his work was immense for Japanese people who were not familiar with the idea of self at that time. In this sense, we should never overlook the strong influence Kobayashi brought with a new theme to the literary world in Japan, something that should be valued highly even today. However, while people’s eyes were opened as they began to see their inner life, some, including Yoshimoto Takaaki, started to wonder where the “other” exists in Kobayashi’s criticism. Even though objects had been “other” to Kobayashi, once he assimilated himself into them through empathy, they became part of himself, objects telling about Kobayashi. As noted above, in his later works the word

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<sup>90</sup> Kobayashi 2004b, p.180.

*mushi* (selfless) often appears. Kobayashi held a strong belief that once one faces an object selflessly, it will naturally show its true appearance. But one might posit the question whether Kobayashi succeeded in being selfless in writing criticism throughout his career. Does the pursuit of self ultimately lead him to selflessness?

By means of various “others,” Kobayashi might have discovered a new self hidden under his consciousness and incorporated it into himself. He would start as himself, meet “others” on his way, sympathize with them and with their thought, learn some meanings from their unique life and come back to himself in the end. From Rimbaud to Van Gogh, from Mozart and Bergson to Norinaga, it seems that Kobayashi never digressed from this path.

In his *Critical Aesthetics: Kobayashi Hideo, Modernity, and Wartime Japan*, James Dorsey points out Kobayashi’s lack of “others” in his vision. Dorsey writes that Kobayashi “had always privileged the singular vision of the individual, an act whereby one conflated a deeply personal consciousness with a fully autonomous aspect of materiality.”<sup>91</sup> By giving several examples of Kobayashi’s essays on his travels in China during wartime and of how Kobayashi nonchalantly describes Chinese people he encountered there, Dorsey analyzes how Kobayashi severs his interiority from exterior existence, including other people. Yet it seems contradictory that Kobayashi, whose essential attitude in writing criticism is to merge with his objects, intentionally distances himself from the exterior world and bears no sympathy for it. What can clearly be said here is that Kobayashi carefully chose the objects with which he could intuitively sympathize, while other objects not compatible with his aesthetic and personal inclination

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<sup>91</sup> Dorsey 2009, p. 219.

remained only as “an unfathomable exteriority, a feature of the landscape,”<sup>92</sup> as Dorsey puts it. This elimination of “others” and attachment to a singular vision shaped only by the lives of figures Kobayashi admired is undoubtedly the reason that he could never liberate himself from being confined within his self-consciousness.

During a round-table talk published under the title “Kobayashi Hideo o megutte” 小林秀雄をめぐって (“On Kobayashi Hideo” 2007),” Yoshimoto Takaaki asserts that what lacked decisively in Kobayashi was the “awareness of the world.”<sup>93</sup> This “world” can be phrased as “others including the subject himself.” According to Yoshimoto, Kobayashi delved into the issue of the self in a way that no other people at that time had done. However, as his exhaustion at the end of his pursuit clearly showed, he could never find the mirror that showed who he actually was. Yoshimoto further explains, “The idea of self is only invalid as long as it is not discussed in a relation to the world... My opinion is that in this case, the ‘self’ is entirely irrelevant and powerless when it comes to facing reality.”<sup>94</sup> A “self” without “others” does not mean anything; or, put another way, without having the viewpoint of “others,” a true self cannot be seen. Seeing oneself or “others” or objects from within is surely one way to appreciate and to learn about them. But there must be an alternate way. Can “I” become a part of “others”? It ought to be possible that one sees himself and judges his situation from outside even though he is lost in a maze. In other words, it should be possible that one places himself among “others” and uses the “third eye” to see himself relatively without being self-righteous. Having said this, one might conclude that without Kobayashi’s search for his self through criticism, people including Yoshimoto might never have been able to notice the notion of

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<sup>92</sup> Dorsey 2009, p. 219.

<sup>93</sup> Yoshimoto 2007, p. 33.

<sup>94</sup> Yoshimoto 2007, p.35.

“others” and realize how important it is in understanding the “self.” Knowing what does not exist means knowing what exists. Although the evaluation of Kobayashi’s later works is clearly divided in contrast to his earlier ones because of the reason mentioned above, Kobayashi’s significance is great in terms of bringing to light the potential that both “self” and “others” have.

## CONCLUSION

Each person who encounters Kobayashi's writings will have his or her own particular experience. Having heard about Kobayashi's name for the first time from a friend one day, I picked up one of his books at a bookstore and started to read. However, because of the complexity of his expression and wording, I found his thought difficult to follow. Yet there was one thing of which I was certain at that time. It is that his writings contain some strong power to attract and mystify people. Having given consideration to why that is for a while now, I have reached the conclusion that people must be attracted to Kobayashi's sincerity, which is supported by his deep trust and respect for his objects. Any writing inevitably shows whether its writer has a deep affection for his object or not. Kobayashi had always dedicated his whole heart to those whom he admired. What differentiated him from other writers at the time was probably the intensity, impetuosity, and thoroughness of his passion. By interacting and struggling with his objects, Kobayashi's self must have been fostered and become more visible to him. It seems that I was awakened to see myself by this attitude of Kobayashi's who had engaged his whole body in the search for his self.

To Kobayashi, the act of seeing is deeply rooted in the affectionate eye of his mother watching him. It is indiscriminating and never judges him. It is willing to accept both good and bad characteristics of him as precious pieces of an irreplaceable person. This is the consistent attitude of Kobayashi as a literary critic.

Kobayashi repeatedly urges his readers to see rather than to think. Without establishing any standards, he tells to them to see and place trust in an object being placed in front of them. What was most important to Kobayashi was not to submit an

answer to a riddle that life gives but to have affection toward the riddle. As Rimbaud suggested in his “Letter of the Seer,” what Kobayashi wished to see was “everything.” However, seeing often requires one to be rigorous in the commitment of time: it is usually not an instantaneous process. Unlike the scientist who can control by extending or contracting as he would like, the seer can never escape the reality of time. The ability to “see” can ultimately be gained by the amount of time one spends on his object. But the struggle brings its own reward.

Kobayashi’s decision in writing on Dostoevsky surely brought him to a big transition. After having felt the limit of facing this momentous Russian writer by means of his self-consciousness, Kobayashi determined to abandon his early style, thus enabling him to stand out among other critics and to take a whole new attitude to depict the concrete and real figure of Dostoevsky with all his heart and strength. Kobayashi also believed in the utter disorder and instability of both Dostoevsky and his characters in the novels and was willing to bear it as if he were living with them. It is clear that this attitude of Kobayashi’s never changed when he was writing on other figures he admired. The enormous amount of time that he spent and his absolute trust in his objects is certainly what differentiated Kobayashi from other critics.

By using one of the Kobayashi’s speeches delivered at the midpoint in his career, this thesis has attempted to demonstrate the meaning of the word *kan* for Kobayashi and the significance it holds as a key to understanding his critical practice. For Kobayashi the true understanding of any matter can be attained by interacting and sympathizing with it without adopting the viewpoint of an observer whose purpose is to analyze. Further, my thesis has also aimed to present a clearer picture of *kan* by focusing on Saigyō, Miyamoto

Musashi, and Bergson. With regard to Musashi's *kan no me*, Bergson's description of movements seems to present a decisive explanation of it, albeit from a very different time and place. *Kan* is a ceaseless motion that perceives the possible movement of one's adversary as if one were seeing in the present moment. Also by creating harmony, in Bergson's term "sympathy," he can sense the movement and flow of energy.

Any existence constantly changes by developing, destroying, expanding and contracting itself. People, music, paintings, architecture flow in accordance with time. This is what Bergson describes as "the continuous melody of our inner life, - a melody which is going on and will go on, indivisible, from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence."<sup>95</sup> Mere analysis, dealing only with a spatialized segment of matter, cannot encompass this constant flow, which seems to be beyond human perception. Kobayashi Hideo must have had an intuition that seeing the living object as it is was the only way to feel the absolute flow of irreplaceable life.

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<sup>95</sup> Bergson 2007, p. 124.

## APPENDIX

### ORIGINAL TEXTS OF THE PASSAGES CITED IN TRANSLATION IN THE BODY OF THE THESIS

#### 1. From Rimbaud's "Lettre du Voyant"

Je dis qu'il faut être voyant, se faire voyant.

Le Poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens. Toutes les forms d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. Ineffable torture où il a besoin de toute la foi, de toute la force surhumaine, où il deviant entre tous le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, -- et le suprême Savant!

#### 2. From *Kansō* 「感想」

終戦の翌々年母が死んだ。母の死は、非常に私の心にこたえた。それに比べると、戦争という大事件は、言わば、私の肉体を右往左往させただけで、私の精神を少しも動かさなかった様に思う。日支事変の頃、従軍記者としての私の心はかなり動揺していたが、戦争が進むにつれて、私の心は頑固に戦争から眼を転じて了った。私は、「西行」や「実朝」を書いていた。戦後、初めて発表した「モオツアルト」も、戦争中南京で書き出したものである。それを本にした時、「母上の靈に捧ぐ」と書いたのも、極く自然な真面目な気持ちからであった。私は、自分の悲しみだけを大事にしていたから、戦後のジャーナリズムの中心問題には、何の関心も持たなかった

#### 3. From Etō Jun's *Kobayashi Hideo* 「小林秀雄」

小林秀雄以前に批評家がいなかったわけではない。しかし、彼以前に自覚的な批評家はいなかった。ここで「自覚的」というのは、批評という行為が彼自身の存在の問題として意識されている、というほどの意味である。

#### 4. From "Samazama naru ishō" 「様々なる意匠」

人は如何にして批評というものと自意識というものとを区別し得よう。彼（ボードレー）の批評の魔力は、彼が批評するとは自覚する事である事を明瞭に悟っ



た点に存する。批評の対象が己れであると他人であるとは一つの事であって二つの事ではない。

#### 5. From “X e no tegami” 「X への手紙」

ただ明瞭なものは自分の苦痛だけだ。

#### 6. From “Hihyōka shikkaku II” 「批評家失格 II」

「子を見るに親に如かず」という…私という人間を一番理解しているのは、母親だと私は信じている。母親が一番私を愛しているからだ。愛しているから私の性格を分析してみることが無用なのだ。私の行動が辿れないことを少しも悲しまない。

#### 7. From “X e no tegami” 「X への手紙」

和やかな眼に出会う機会は実に実に稀れである。和やかな眼だけが恐ろしい、何を見られているかわからぬからだ。和やかな眼だけが美しい、まだ俺には辿りきれない、秘密を持っているからだ。この眼こそ一番張り切った眼なのだ、一番注意深い眼なのだ。たとえこの眼を所有することが難しい事だとしても、人は何故俺の事をあれはああいいう奴と素直に言い切れないのだろうか。たったそれだけの勇氣すら何故持てないのだろうか…例えば、俺の母親の理解に一足だって近よる事は出来ない、母親は俺の言動の全くの不可解にもかかわらず、俺という男はああいいう奴だという眼を一瞬も失った事はない。

#### 8. From “Tsumi to batsu ni tsuite II” 「罪と罰について II」

彼の裡には、他力を借りず自己たらんとする極端な渴望があり、既に定められたもの、興えられたものを否定し、一切を自力で始めようとするその強い性向は、遂に外的存在のみならず自分自身の存在の必然性も拒絶して、精神の可能性の世界に閉じこもるに至る。彼はこの世界の主人となった時に、観念が観念を追うこの空しい世界には、凡そ主人と呼べる様なものは存じないことに愕然とする。

#### 9. From “X e no tegami” 「X への手紙」

俺は懸命に何かを忍んでいる、だが何を忍んでいるのか決してわからない。極度の注意を払っている、だが何に対して払っているのか決して分からない。

#### 10. From “Shishin” 「私信」

僕は、自分の批評的創作の素材として、ドストエフスキイを選びました。近代文学史上に、彼ほど、豊富な謎を孕んだ作家はいないと思ったからであります。僕は彼の姿をいささかも歪めてみようとは思いません。又、歪めてみようにも僕に

はその力がありません。彼の姿は、読めば読むほど、僕の主観から独立して堂々と生きて来るのを感じます。すると僕はもはや批評という自分の能力に興味を持たなくなる、いやそんなものが消滅するのを明らかに感じます。

#### 11. From “Watakushi shōsetsu ron” 「私小説論」

ドストエフスキイの作品には、このような熱情や心理の偶然的な、奇怪と思われる様な動きはいくらでも出てくる。現実の世界でそういう事は方々に起こっているからであるが、そういうことは通俗小説では決して起こらない…ドストエフスキイはこの偶然と感傷に充ちた世界であらゆるものが相対的であると感じつつ仕事をした人で、そういう惑乱した現実常に忠実だったところに彼の新しいリアリズムの根底がある。ジイドもドストエフスキイより遥かに貧弱にだが、遥かに意識的に同じ世界に対して、これに缺を入れずあくまでその最も純粋な姿を実現しようと努めた。

#### 12. From “Sensō nit suite” 「戦争について」

銃をとらねばならぬ時がきたら、喜んで国のために死ぬであろう。僕にはこれ以上の覚悟が考えられないし、また必要だとも思わない…文学は平和のためにあるのであって戦争のためにあるのではない。文学者は平和に対してはどんな複雑な態度でもとることができるが、戦争の渦中にあるのは、たった一つの態度しかとすることはできない。戦いは勝たねばならぬ。

#### 13. From “Bungaku to jibun” 「文学と自分」

歴史の流れは必然の流れ

#### 14. From “Taema” 「当麻」

人間の生死に関する思想が、これほど単純な純粋な形を取り得るとは…室町時代という、現世の無常と信仰の永遠とを聊かも疑わなかったあの健全な時代を、史家は乱世と呼んで安心している。

#### 15. From “Mujō to iu koto” 「無常という事」

解釈を拒絶して動じないものだけが美しい…解釈だらけの現代には一番秘められた思想だ。

#### 16. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

あの坐像が私たちに与える感銘は、私たちが止観というものについて、何か肝腎なものを感じ得ている様子ではあるまいか。

#### 17. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

自分が歌を詠むのは、遥かに尋常とは異なっている。月も花もホトトギスも雪も凡そ相ある所、皆是虚妄ならざるはない。分かり切ったことである。であるから、花を詠んでも花と思った事もなければ、月を詠ずるが実は月だと思った事はない。

18. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

彼（西行）は歌の世界に、人間孤独の観念を、新たに導き入れ、これを縦横に歌い切った人である。

19. From “Saigyō” 「西行」

「いかにすべき我心」

20. From “Saigyō” 「西行」

如何にして歌を作ろうかという悩みに身も細る想いをしていた平安末期の歌壇に、如何にして己れを知ろうかという殆ど歌にもならぬ悩みを提げて西行は登場したのである。

21. From “Saigyō” 「西行」

自分の運命に関する強い或は強すぎる予感を持っていたのである。

22. From “Saigyō” 「西行」

恐らく、彼は汀の氷を長い間見詰めていたであろう。群がる苦痛がそのまま凍りつくまで。

23. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

武蔵は、見るという事について、観見二つの見様があるという事を言っている。細川忠利の為に書いた覚書のなかに、目付之事というのがあって、立会の際、相手方に目を付ける場合、観の目強く、身の目弱く見るべし、と言っております。見の目とは、彼に言わせれば常の目、普通の目の働き方である。敵の動きがああだとかこうだとか分析的に知的に合点する目であるが、もう一つ相手の存在を全体的に直覚する目がある。「目の玉を動かさず、うらやかに見る」目がある、そういう目は、「敵合近づくとも、いか程も遠く見る目」だと言うのです。「意は目に付き、心は付かざるもの也」、常の目は見ようとするが、見ようとしなない心にも目はあるのである。言わば心眼です。見ようとする意が目を曇らせる。だから見の目を弱く観の目を強くせよと言う。

24. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

観という言葉には、もともと或る立場に立って、或る立場に頼って物を見るという事を強く拒否する意味合いがある、現実の一切のカテゴリカルな限定を否定して、現実そのものと共鳴共感するという意味合いがある。

25. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

空観とは、真理に関する方法ではなく、真如を得る道なのである、現実を様々に限定する様々な理解を空しくして、はじめて、現実そのものと共感共鳴する事が出来るとする修練なのである。

26. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

通念化した教養の助けを借りず、彼が自分の青年期の経験から、直接に、ある極めて普遍的な思想を、独特の工夫によって得るに至ったという事です。

27. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

Vision という言葉は、神学的には、選ばれた人々には天にいます神が見える、つまり見神という vision を持つという風に使われていた。

28. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

その当時、痛感したことは、絵や彫刻の沈黙に堪えるという事が、いかに難しいかという事であった…ある絵に現れた真剣さが、何を意味するか問おうとして、注意力を緊張させると、印象から言葉への通常のを、逆に言葉から近くへと進まねばならぬ努力感が其処に生じ、殆どいつも、一種の苦痛さえ経験した。

29. From *Motoori Norinaga* 「本居宣長」

宣長の古典研究の眼目は、古歌古書を「我物」にする事、その為の「見よう、心の用いよう」にあった…「歌ノ本意アキラカニシテ、意味ノフカキ処マデ、心ニ徹底スル也」とは、この経験の深化は、相手との共感に至る事が言いたいのである。

30. From *Motoori Norinaga* 「本居宣長」

匂宮という「あだなる人」も、薫という「まめなる人」も、浮舟というあわれな女性の内には這入れない。作者は、浮舟の背後に身を隠し、読者に語りかけるようである。御覧の通りこの女は子供だが、子供は何にも知らないとは、果たして本当の事であろうか、と。

32. From “Watakushi no jinseikan” 「私の人生観」

見るものと見られるものとの対立を突破して、かような対立を生む源に推参しようとする能力である。

33. From Yoshimoto Takaaki’s “Kobayashi Hideo o megutte” 「小林秀雄をめぐって」

世界に対する認識

34. From Yoshimoto Takaaki’s “Kobayashi Hideo o megutte” 「小林秀雄をめぐって」

ぼくは「私」っていうものをね、世界と「私」っていうふうに世界をどう掴むかっていう問題と関連しない「私」っていうのはどのように掘られても無効であろう…あなたのおっしゃる「私」は向こうから来る現実に対しては、全く無関係であるし無力であるっていうのが、意味が無化されている、無意味であるっていうのが僕の考え方です。

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