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The World as a Dialogue of Things: the Epistemological Dimension of the Concept of *Mono-no Aware*

ABSTRACT

Any worldview is a kind of an attempt to describe the relationships in which all the variety of things (including human beings) is situated within the common cosmos.

In Japanese traditional culture, the nature of these relationships is considered as intersubjective and procedural, therefore it can be represented in the form of a dialogue of things, i.e. some kind of dialectical movement between "self" and "other".

The deep aestheticism inherent in Japanese culture postulates the primacy of the sensuous in cognition. But we propose to speak of aesthetics, of sensuality, not as a form of cognition, but as a way of dealing and dialogue with things.

For the purposes of this report, we will consider language as an agent of such sensuous dialogue, and the notion of *mono no aware* as an attribute of this dialogue. In doing so, we will try to move away from the usual consideration of *mono no aware* as only a category of aesthetics; we will attempt to characterize it as an element of a larger structure, as that which makes possible, in principle, the dialogue of things as an aesthetic and epistemological process.

The notion of *mono no aware* was first conceptualized by Motoori Norinaga. In his philosophy, *mono-no aware* acts as an attribute of a specific way of manifesting reality and its deep sensory perception.

The report is intended to examine the main elements of Motoori Norinaga's epistemological theory in the context of their connection with *mono no aware*. Particular attention will be paid to the analysis of the concept of voice (koe 声) as a language manifested in reality, which, like things, has *katati* 形 and *sugata* 姿, i.e. "external" form and "internal" image. The voice, being the primordial sound, is meant to form a trust in experience based on feeling and aesthetic experience. Such a philosophy of language in a particular sense 'returns language to the body' (as opposed to Confucian theories of language), where it becomes a voice that reflects and manifests things, forming an intersubjective reality.